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Email: news@arubatoday.com Website: www.arubatoday.com Tuesday, January 5, 2010

INSIDE TODAY

WORLD NEWS

DUBAI SKYSCRAPER



The Burj Khalifa, the world's 828 meter tallest building is illuminated during the official opening ceremony in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Monday, Jan. 4, 2010.

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SPORTS NEWS

NFL PLAYOFFS



Baltimore Ravens running back Willis McGahee (23) celebrates after scoring on a 2-yard touchdown run against the Oakland Raiders in the third quarter of an NFL football game in Oakland, Calif., Sunday, Jan. 3, 2010. The Ravens clinched an AFC wild-card berth.

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TSA officer Robert Howard signals an airline passenger forward at a security check-point at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, Monday, Jan. 4, 2010, in SeaTac, Wash. The names of dozens more people have been added to the government's terrorist watch list and no-fly list after a failed terrorist attack on Christmas prompted U.S. officials to closely scrutinize a large database of suspected terrorists, an intelligence officials said.

Associated Press



Police block Las Vegas Blvd. in front of the federal building in Las Vegas, Monday, Jan. 4, 2010. A gunman opened fire in the lobby of a federal building in downtown Las Vegas on Monday, killing one court officer and wounding a second before he was shot to death.

Associated Press

Guard, gunman dead in Vegas building shooting

KEN RITTER

Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A gunman opened fire at a federal building in downtown Las Vegas on Monday, killing one court officer and wounding a second before he was shot to death.

The gunfire erupted moments after 8 a.m. at the start of the work week and lasted for several minutes. Shots echoed around tall buildings in the area, more than a mile north of the Las Vegas Strip. An Associated Press reporter on the eighth floor of a high-rise building within sight of the building heard a sustained barrage of gunfire.

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European response mixed to new U.S. security demands

GREGORY KATZ

Associated Press Writer

LONDON (AP) — Airline passengers bound for the United States faced a hodgepodge of security measures across the world Monday, but most European airports did not appear to be following a new U.S. demand for increased screening of passengers from 14 countries. U.S. officials in Washington said the new security measures would be implemented Monday but there were few visible changes on the ground in Europe, which sends thousands of passengers on hundreds of daily flights to the United States. In addition, few if any changes in airline procedures were reported in the 14 countries named by the U.S. as security risks, although officials in Saudi Arabia said extra security personnel had been placed at the airport.

No changes were seen Monday at international airports in Syria, Algeria, Libya or Lebanon, four other countries on the list.

"Everything is the same, there is no extra security," an aviation official in Lebanon said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly. The changes ordered by President Barack Obama's administration followed the arrest of a Nigerian man, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who allegedly tried to set off an explosive device on a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit on Christmas Day. Abdulmutallab is at a federal prison in Milan, Michigan and faces a court hearing on Friday.

show up more than seven hours ahead of their Delta Air Lines direct flight to Atlanta.

"Whatever it takes to keep passengers safe, I'm all for it," said Emeka Ojukwu, 46, a Nigerian who now lives in New York state. "It's really a bad rap for the country. This is the last thing Nigeria needs." Asian airports had already ratcheted up security following the Christmas Day attack, but those in South Korea and Pakistan took additional measures.

Continued on Page 6

A third uninvited guest got into White House dinner



FILE - In this Nov. 18, 2008, file photo, the White House is seen in Washington. The White House is once again explaining how uninvited guests wound up shaking hands with President Barack Obama. This time, a Georgia couple hoping to tour the White House ended up at an invitation-only Veterans Day breakfast on Nov. 11, 2009. Officials say the couple mistakenly showed up a day early and were allowed into the breakfast because there were no public tours available.

EILEEN SULLIVAN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A third uninvited guest made his way into the White House state dinner for Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in November, the Secret Service

said Monday.

As the Secret Service was reviewing how an attention-hungry couple — Tareq and Michaela Salahi — got into the dinner without being on the guest list, officials discovered that a third person made it

through security without an invitation as well. The Secret Service said the man — whom they would not identify — did not get close to the president or the first lady.

The Secret Service is investigating the Salahis,

Associated Press

and the Justice Department is looking into whether they broke any laws. The Secret Service said the other man they just learned of is now under investigation as well. The man traveled to the White House from the hotel where the Indian delegation was staying. The Secret Service said the man arrived with members of that delegation. But he was not in the Secret Service's database of people prescreened and approved to attend the event. Part of the security screening is a criminal background check that the Secret Service does before a guest enters the White House. The Salahis and the man traveling with the Indian delegation did not go through that background check.

But the Secret Service said all three uninvited guests went through other screening, such as metal detectors, before the event.

The man is a U.S. citizen and was with a group of Indian business leaders before the state dinner, according to a State Department official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to speak publicly about the

investigation. The Indian embassy asked the State Department to transport the group to the White House dinner, the official said, adding that it's rare for the agency to provide these services to delegations visiting the United States in a nonofficial capacity.

State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said the agency has reviewed the incident and already made changes for how it handles foreign delegations. Subpoenas have been issued for the Salahis to testify before Congress on the Nov. 24 incident. Through their attorney, the Salahis have said they will invoke their U.S. constitutional right to refuse to testify against themselves.

Three uniformed Secret Service officers have been put on administrative leave because of the security breach. President Barack Obama acknowledged that the system did not work as it should have, but he said the episode hasn't shaken his confidence in his protectors.

Secret Service Director Mark Sullivan has said the security breach is his agency's fault but that the president was never at risk. □

Sen. John Kerry undergoing second hip replacement

BOSTON — Sen. John Kerry returned to Massachusetts General Hospital on Monday for a second hip replacement by the doctor who replaced his right hip in August.

Kerry spokesman David Wade told The Associated Press that Dr. Dennis Burke achieved such good results the first time that Kerry decided to have his left hip replaced. In both cases, the joints had become arthritic and inflexible from age and athletic activity.

The surgery lasted several hours before Kerry was moved to a hospital room. He will remain several days before being discharged and beginning outpatient rehabilitation.

The 66-year-old Kerry decided to have the operation just after the holiday season to ensure "he'd be back on his feet for the legislative period later this month," Wade said.

That could include a vote on a national health care plan that will require support from all 60 Democratic senators — including Kerry — to pass the Senate. The senior senator from Massachusetts is also scheduled to welcome a new junior colleague after Jan. 19, when his home state holds a special election to replace the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. He died Aug. 25 of brain cancer.

Fellow Democrat Martha Coakley, the state's attorney general, has led in polls over her Republican rival, state Sen. Scott Brown, and an independent candidate, Libertarian Joseph L. Kennedy. He is unrelated to Kennedy's famed political family. □

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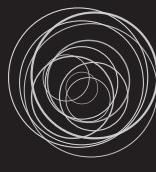
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Census Bureau kicks off once-a-decade head count

By

STEPHEN

OHLEMACHER

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Census Bureau kicks off its \$300 million campaign Monday to prod, coax and cajole the nation's more than 300 million residents to fill out their once-a-decade census forms.

The bureau will mail out the 10-question forms to about 120 million households in March.

On Monday, Census Director Robert Groves starts the nationwide campaign with an event in New York City where he is scheduled to unveil a 46-foot trailer called "Mail It Back." In all, 13 vehicles are to be present at about 800 events around the country, from small community happenings to the Super Bowl and the NCAA Final Four.

"The whole purpose is to reach out to people at local events," Groves said.

Residents can expect to receive letters in early March notifying them that census forms will arrive between March 15-17. Residents who don't respond will get a follow-up postcard. Those who still don't respond can expect a visit from a census taker by early May.

In 2000, about 67 percent of households mailed back their forms, ending a three decade decline in the response rate. Follow-up visits are expensive. For every percentage point decrease in the response rate, the Census Bureau says it costs an additional \$85 million to find and count those people. The Constitution requires the head count every 10 years to draw congressional districts and to dole out Electoral College votes to the states. Congress uses the count to distribute more than \$400 billion each year in federal

aid to state, local and tribal governments.

Census data is used by government agencies and private companies alike, to locate pools of skilled workers, determine where schools and hospitals should be placed and to trace victims of natural disasters. In the Gulf Coast region, this year's census will provide the most accurate measure to date of how Hurricanes Katrina and Rita affected population trends.

"There's political power involved because of the Constitution," Groves said. "There's money involved as well."

The 10-question form is one of the shortest in the history of the census. Residents will be asked the number of people living in each household as well as their age, race and whether they own their home or rent. Other questions — on income, education levels and other characteristics — are addressed in the annual American Community Survey, which has been phased in over much of the past decade.

The Census Bureau faces special challenges locating residents because of the high number of foreclosures, as well as immigrants wary of government workers amid a crackdown on illegal immigration. Census officials emphasize that responses are confidential by law, meaning they cannot be shared with other federal agencies or law enforcement. Under the Constitution, the government is required to count everyone, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status.

Advocates have urged the Commerce Department, which oversees the Census Bureau, to improve outreach to minority

communities, which are typically undercounted.

This year, about 13 million forms in both English and Spanish will be sent to areas with high concentrations of people who speak Spanish. Residents can also request forms in Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Russian.

"I don't think you can ever do enough," Groves said. "What we are doing, I think, is something to be proud of."

In 2000, the Census Bureau noted for the first time an overcount of 1.3 million people, mostly from duplicate counts of more affluent whites with



Census employees hold placards during the kick off of the 2010 Census Portrait of America Road Tour in Times Square in New York City. The cross-country interactive tour is designed to encourage participation and increase awareness about the 2010 Census which will arrive in mailboxes nationwide March 15-17.

AFP/Getty Images

multiple homes. About 4.5 million people were ultimately missed, mostly blacks and Hispanics. □

Staff quits after Ala. congressman switches to GOP

By BEN EVANS

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — All but one of the Washington staffers for Rep. Parker Griffith resigned on Monday in protest of the Alabama congressman's decision to switch from the Democratic to the Republican Party.

In a sharply worded statement, Griffith's former chief of staff, Sharon Wheeler, called the freshman congressman's switch a "mistake" that goes against the interests of his district, which relies heavily on federal funding for defense and aerospace jobs.

"We cannot in good conscience continue working for him," Wheeler said. "We do not know what the future holds, but we are taking a leap of faith with the belief we will soon find ourselves in the employment of principled public officials."

Griffith's legislative aides, interns and other junior staffers also quit, joining his former spokesman, Sean Magers,

who had already announced he was leaving. The resignations left Griffith with just one staffer in his Washington office, a scheduler. A handful of employees remained at his district offices in Alabama, said Gene Tackett, his district director.

In a statement, Griffith said the resignations were expected. He said all of his offices remain open and that he is confident he can fill the vacancies by Jan. 12, when Congress reconvenes after the holidays.

"It is an unfortunate fact that any time a change like this occurs partisanship becomes an issue as it has in this case," Griffith said. "The staff members who have resigned have served this district diligently and I wish them well in their future endeavors." Griffith, a former state senator, narrowly won the seat last year and announced his party switch on Dec. 22, saying he could no longer support the Democratic agenda on health



This is a Dec. 22, 2009 file photo of Rep. Parker Griffith of Alabama discussing his decision to switch from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party during a news conference at his home in Huntsville, Ala. An already difficult situation for Democrats in Congress is worsening as the 2010 political season opens.

Associated Press

care and other issues.

Wheeler said Griffith made a "well-intentioned but misguided" decision. She said he abandoned the legacy of conservative Democratic leadership in the north Alabama district, which includes Huntsville. □

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AP sources: Bomber at CIA base was a double agent



In this file photo from Feb. 19, 2009, Central Intelligence Agency Director Leon E. Panetta stands in front of the Memorial Wall as he addresses CIA employees after being sworn in by Vice President Joe Biden, at CIA Headquarters in Langley, Va. The stars on the wall represent CIA employees who have died in the line of duty. The Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2009 attack that killed seven CIA employees at a remote outpost in Afghanistan is likely to raise questions about whether the agency could do more to protect its operatives on dangerous assignments.

Associated Press

ADAM GOLDMAN

PAMELA HESS

Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The suicide bomber who killed eight people inside a CIA base in Afghanistan was a Jordan-born terrorist double agent who was invited to the base because he claimed to have information targeting Osama bin Laden's second-in-command, a former senior U.S. intelligence official and a foreign government official confirmed Monday.

The bombing killed seven CIA employees — four officers and three contracted security guards — and a Jordanian intelligence officer, Ali bin Zaid, according to a second former U.S. intelligence official. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the incident.

The former senior intelligence official and the foreign official said the bomber was Humam Khalil Abu-Mulal al-Balawi, a 36-year old doctor from Zarqa, Jordan, who had been recruited by Jordanian intelligence. Zarqa is the hometown of slain al-Qaida in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. NBC News first reported the bomber's identity.

He was arrested more than a year ago by Jordanian intelligence and was thought to have been persuaded to support U.S. and Jordanian efforts against al-Qaida, according to the NBC report. He was invited to Camp Chapman, a tightly secured CIA forward base in Khost province on the fractious Afghan-Pakistan frontier, because he was offering urgent information to track down Ayman al-Zawahri, Osama bin Laden's right-hand man.

The CIA declined to comment on the report. Hajj Yacoub, a self-proclaimed spokesman for the Taliban in Pakistan, identified the bomber on Muslim militant Web sites as Hammam Khalil Mohammed, also known as Abu-Dujana al-Khurasani. There was no independent confirmation of Yacoub's statement.

Al-Balawi was not searched for bombs when he got onto Camp Chapman, according to both former officials and a current intelligence official.

He detonated the explosive shortly after his debriefing began, according to one of the former intelligence officials. In addition to the eight dead, there were at least six wounded, according to the CIA.

The former senior intelligence official said one

of the big unanswered questions is why so many people were present for the debriefing — the interview of the source — when the explosive was detonated.

A half-dozen former CIA officers told The Associated Press that in most cases, only one or two agency officers would typically meet with a possible informant along with an interpreter. Such small meetings would normally be used to limit the danger and the possible exposure of the identities of both officers and informants. An online jihadist magazine in September 2009 posted an interview with al-Balawi, according to SITE Monitoring Service, a terrorist watch group that reads and translates messages on extremist forums.

SITE said Monday that al-Balawi used his pseudonym — identified as Khorsani — in the postings, describing how he rose through the ranks of online jihadist forums. He said he went to Afghanistan to fight, and he exhorted others to do violence.

"No words are more eloquent than those proven by acts, so that if that Muslim survives, he will be one who proves his words with acts. If he dies in the Cause of Allah, he will grant his words glory that will be permanent marks on the path to guide to jihad, with permission from Allah," al-Balawi wrote, according to SITE's translation.

A Jordanian government official, who was not authorized to speak to the press, said the Jordanian government has no connection to the bomber. The official said the Jordanian government had not verified whether the bomber was Jordanian.

The Taliban's Yacoub said the Jordanian intelligence officer, bin Zaid, was helping the CIA recruit agents to spy on al-Qaida in Afghanistan. Bin Zaid allegedly recruited the suicide bomber.

Jordan's state news agency Petra identified bin Zaid as an army officer on a humanitarian mission in Afghanistan. It said he was killed Wednesday evening "as a martyr while performing the sacred duty of the Jordanian forces in Afghanistan." It did not provide other details.

The Jordanian military released a brief statement acknowledging bin Zaid had been killed in Afghanistan, but it did not mention he was working with Jordanian intelligence or cooperating with the CIA. □



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VEGAS SHOOTING**Continued from Front Page**

A passer-by said he counted at least 40 shots.

"The first shot that I heard was a shotgun blast. I knew it wasn't fireworks," said Ray Freres, 59, a sandwich shop manager and Vietnam veteran who said he was behind the federal court building at the time.

"I heard an exchange of gunfire. I was watching the street," Freres told the AP. "If they were coming my way, I was going the other way."

The U.S. Marshals Service said the victims included a 48-year-old deputy U.S. marshal who was hospitalized and a 65-year-old court security officer who died.

U.S. Sen. John Ensign, a Nevada Republican, told reporters it appeared the gunman acted alone and the shooting was not a terrorist act.

"Right now they have no motive established," Ensign told a news conference outside the building. "Bottom line is,

he didn't get past security." Chief Deputy U.S. Marshal Roxanna Lea Irwin also said authorities believe the shooter acted alone.

FBI Special Agent Joseph Dickey said the gunman died across the street shortly after the shootout. The man's identity and motive were not immediately known. His body remained for several hours in front of the restored historic Fifth Street School, a sprawling white stucco campus that dates to 1936 and was recently renovated.

John Clark, director of the Marshals Service in Washington, did not immediately identify the officers, but called them heroes.

"The brave and immediate actions of these two individuals saved lives by stopping the threat of a reckless and callous gunman," Clark said in a statement.

Bullet holes marked the entrance of the eight-story modern federal building, which was locked down after

the shootout. After police arrived, paramedics helped two people out and down a ramp to ambulances.

A helicopter view showed heavily armed officers in flak jackets scouring the federal building's roof. Shortly afterward, employees in small groups were escorted by armed officers to the auditorium of the Las Vegas Academy, a school three blocks away. Dickey called the building evacuation "standard procedure" in such an incident.

The gunfire erupted as downtown was busy with office workers and jurors reporting for duty, both at the federal building and the 16-story Regional Justice Center, which houses state and local courts two blocks away.

The state courthouse was evacuated as a precaution and closed for the day, court spokesman Michael Sommermeyer said.

Las Vegas police spokeswoman Barbara Morgan said the shooter had been shot in



A police officer stands guard near the federal building in Las Vegas, Monday, Jan. 4, 2010. A gunman opened fire in the lobby of a federal building in downtown Las Vegas on Monday, killing one court officer and wounding a second before he was shot to death.

Associated Press

the head. "It looks like he went in there and just started unloading," Morgan said.

The Lloyd D. George U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building opened in 2002 and is named for a longtime senior federal judge who still hears cases. It has federal courts covering Nevada and offices for federal officials including

Ensign and fellow U.S. Sen. Harry Reid. Neither was in the building at the time, authorities said.

The structure was touted as the first federal building built to comply with blast resistance requirements following the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City. □

Letters prompt anthrax scares across Alabama

By JAY REEVES

Associated Press Writer

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Envelopes containing white powder set off anthrax scares in five Alabama cities, shutting down two federal courthouses Monday and trapping a congressman in his office as authorities tested the substance.

No one was injured, and investigators said at least five of the letters — all sent to the offices of senators or congressmen — were believed to be from the same source.

None of the letters tested positive for anthrax or other hazardous substances, but officials didn't immediately say what they contained.

Authorities said letters containing white powder were sent to the Mobile and Foley offices of Republican Rep. Jo Bonner, who was forced to remain with staffers in the Mobile office while officials tested the

substance.

"Each letter contained a small bag with a white powdery substance, and neither of these bags were opened," said Mike Lewis, a spokesman for Bonner. The FBI and U.S. Postal Inspection Service said letters also were sent to the offices of U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers and U.S. Sens. Jeff Sessions and Richard Shelby in Montgomery. FBI spokeswoman Angela Tobon said all the letters sent to the lawmakers' offices appeared to be from a common source.

Two more letters were sent to the federal courthouse in Anniston, and another letter was found at a federal courthouse in Birmingham, where an employee doing extra work found the first envelope Sunday at the Robert Vance Federal Building.

"It wasn't anything that was dangerous," said Dr. Donald Williamson, head of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

With the Vance building already closed through Wednesday as a precaution, authorities were called to the federal courthouse in Anniston on Monday morning after mysterious powder was found in an office there, prompting another shutdown.

"We did sample it and test it, and it came back negative for a hazardous material," said Anniston Fire Chief Bill Fincher.

Foley Fire Chief Joey Darby said the letter found at Bonner's office there tested positive for "a very common household product," but he wouldn't elaborate. The letter apparently was delivered last Thursday and sat unopened during the long New Year's holiday weekend.

"From what we are hearing that's consistent with some of the other cases," he said.

Williamson said tests would be conducted to determine the exact nature of the powder. □

**SCREENING RULES****Continued from Front Page**

Yet Europe remains the key crossroads for air travelers heading to the United States, with over 800 scheduled trans-Atlantic flights a day in 2009, especially from major hubs like London, Paris, Amsterdam and Frankfurt. Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport was using 15 full-body scanners on flights to the U.S. and Dutch officials announced Monday they will buy 60 more scanners. In Oslo, U.S.-bound passengers had to show their passports and boarding passes twice at the gate, get their carry-ons

searched and go through full body pat-downs.

Yet other European nations were still studying the new U.S. rules.

In Britain, a spokesman for the Department of Transportation said he was still trying to decipher its practical implications. He refused to give his name due to the sensitivity of the subject.

His comments were echoed by officials in Germany, France and Switzerland, who said no new measures had been taken since airport security was increased following the failed Christmas Day attack.

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The U.S. State Department lists Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria as state sponsors of terrorism. The U.S. said other countries whose passengers should face enhanced screening include Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria,

said the changes will not be implemented until they are ordered by the French government.

In Spain, U.S.-bound passengers from countries on the new watch list were not being singled out for body frisks, a security official admitted, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with agency rules.

At London's busy Heathrow Airport, management consultant James MacDonald said before boarding a flight to Denver that he would not mind an extra wait if it enhanced flight security.

"I can understand why if you're from Pakistan or whatever it would make it even worse," said MacDonald, a 52-year-old American. "On the other hand, if it's a question of safety, I really don't see any argument there."

U.S. authorities said as of Monday anyone traveling from or through nations regarded as state sponsors of terrorism — as well as "other countries of interest" — will be required to go through enhanced screening. The Transportation Security Administration said those techniques included full-body pat-downs, carry-on bag searches, full-body scanning and explosive detection technology.

The U.S. State Department lists Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria as state sponsors of terrorism. The U.S. said other countries whose passengers should face enhanced screening include Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria,

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Yemen.

Nationals from those countries already require a visa to enter the United States.

Iraq's international airport in Baghdad already has extremely tight security, with dogs sniffing luggage and passengers getting patted even down before they can enter the airport.

In Nigeria, a minister said the government would perform whatever security checks the U.S. government requested.

"It is for the good of everybody that everybody is searched thoroughly," Information Minister Dora Akunyili said.

But she questioned Nigeria's inclusion on the list, saying Abdulmutallab had lived and studied abroad for years.

"It is unfair to discriminate against 150 million Nigerians over the behavior of one person," Akunyili said. "It is outside of the shores of this country that he developed this nasty tendency to do what he tried to do."

Chris Doyle, director of the Council for Arab-British Understanding, said the extra U.S. security demands could further alienate travelers from Muslim countries.

"There is already concern amongst Arabs and Muslims who feel they are being targeted at airports," he said.

At Heathrow, Hamid Darizadeh, a Briton of Iranian origin, said the new restrictions would unfairly penalize a huge swath of people and added that Iranians already received extra attention when traveling.

"By doing this, you basically turn someone into a suspect just because they have the wrong color passport," he said, smoking outside the Terminal 3 building.

There is no European-wide consensus yet on the need for full-body scanners — which are being sought in Britain by Prime Minister Gordon Brown — but European Union officials said the issue will be raised at a special security meeting soon.

Some travelers thought privacy concerns about full-body scanners were overrated.

"Privacy can be easily sacrificed in the name of security," said Mauro Forno, a 46-year-old tourist who flew into Rome from Genoa with his family. "Nudity is not a problem for anybody at the beach."

The world's airline pilots welcomed the new security measures demanded by the U.S., noting that they had not created massive flight delays like those seen after the 9/11 attacks.

"We want the bad guys kept away from airplanes," said Gideon Ewers, spokesman for the International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations (IFALPA). "We firmly believe that intelligence gathering and interdiction of potential terrorists is the way to protect aircraft and the flying public."

The Israel Airports Authority declined to discuss security arrangements at Ben-Gurion International airport, considered one of the safest in the world.

In Jordan, a key U.S. ally, an official at Amman's Queen Alia International Airport said "enhanced techniques" were being applied, especially in screening passengers bound for the United States. He declined to elaborate.

U.S.-bound passengers had to go through additional security before boarding flights in Seoul, and officials there compiled lists of "suspicious" passengers to monitor based on their nationalities, travel patterns and ticket purchases. Pakistan's national airline said it began intensifying security checks Jan. 1 for U.S.-bound passengers, including full body searches, even though Pakistan has no direct flights to the United States. □

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Dubai opens half-mile-high tower, world's tallest

ADAM SCHRECK,

Associated Press Writer

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Dubai opened the world's tallest skyscraper Monday in a blaze of fireworks, then added a final flourish: It renamed the tower for the head of neighboring Abu Dhabi, whose billions bailed out Dubai amid last year's financial crisis.

Long known as Burj Dubai — Arabic for "Dubai Tower" — the building rises 2,717 feet (828 meters) from the desert. The \$1.5 billion "vertical city" of luxury apartments and offices and a hotel designed by Giorgio Armani also plans to have the world's highest mosque (158th floor) and swimming pool (76th floor).

Its backers wanted the skyscraper to be a monument to the boundless, can-do spirit of Dubai — one of a federation of seven small sheikdoms that make up the United Arab Emirates — but the timing could not be worse. Property prices in parts of Dubai collapsed by nearly half in the past year, the result of easy credit and overbuilding during a real estate bubble that has since burst.

Riding to the rescue was Sheik Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the ruler of oil-rich neighbor Abu Dhabi, which pumped tens of billions of dollars into Dubai last year as it struggled to pay enormous debts.

As officials opened the tapering metal-and-glass spire with fireworks and multicolored lights, they unexpectedly announced it would be renamed Burj Khalifa, to honor the Abu Dhabi leader who is also president of the UAE.

Thousands of cheering, clapping spectators watched as a tally projected on huge screens at the opening ceremony revealed the tower's most closely guarded secret — its height of 2,717 feet. That made it more than 1,000 feet higher than the skyscraper known as Taipei 101 in Taiwan, which at 1,667 feet had been the world's tallest since 2004.

The tallest building in the United States, the Willis Tower in Chicago, comes



Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, seen at centre, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday, Jan. 3, 2010. Burj Khalifa is over 800 metres (2,625 ft) tall and has more than 160 stores, the most of any building in the world.

in at 1,451 feet. Before they were destroyed in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the World Trade Center towers both topped 1,360 feet. The Freedom Tower being planned for the site will measure 1,776 feet, with completion estimated in 2013.

The exact number of floors for the Burj Khalifa is not known, and could reflect how the developer chose to calculate the total.

Mohammed Alabbar, chairman of the tower's developer Emaar Properties, initially said Monday it had "more than 200" stories, but he later backtracked to more than 165 inhabitable floors, given its tapered top. Promotional materials sent before the tower's opening said it contained 160 stories. Developers say they are confident in the safety of the tower, which is nearly twice the height of New York's Empire State Building.

Greg Sang, Emaar's director of projects, said the Burj Khalifa has "refuge floors" at 25 to 30 story intervals that are more fire resistant and have separate air supplies in case of emergency. Its reinforced concrete structure, he said, makes it stronger than steel-frame skyscrapers.

"A plane won't be able to slice through the Burj like it did through the steel columns of the World Trade Center," he said.

Dubai has not been a target of terrorist attacks or threats that have been made public.

The tower was designed by Chicago-based Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, which has a long track record in engineering some of the world's tallest buildings, including the Willis Tower. Ahmed Elghazouli, a professor of structural engineering at Imperial College London who was not involved with the Burj's construction, said such groundbreaking buildings typically employ some of the world's best engineers, and go through more rigorous testing and require more studies during design than standard towers.

"I have no doubt that it has been looked after very well in terms of design and construction," he said when asked about the building's safety. "I would be much more comfortable getting into a building like this knowing that so much background work has gone into it."

Dubai was little more than a sleepy fishing village a generation ago, but it boomed into the Middle East's commercial hub in the past two decades on the back of business-friendly trading policies, relative security, and vast amounts of overseas investment.

With little oil of its own, Dubai relied on cheap loans to pump up its international clout during

professor at the University of Durham who has written extensively about the UAE.

Burj developer Emaar is also partly owned by the Dubai government, but is not part of struggling Dubai World, which has investments ranging from Dubai's manmade islands and seaports to luxury retailer Barneys New York and the ocean liner Queen Elizabeth 2.

Emaar's Alabbar said the landmark Burj is 90 percent sold in a mix of residential units, offices and other space, offering a counterpoint to Dubai's financial woes.

At their peak, some apartments in the Burj were selling for more than \$1,900 per square foot, although they now can go for less than half that, said Heather Wipperman Amiji, chief executive of Dubai real estate consultancy Investment Boutique.

Amiji said some buyers may struggle to find tenants at going rates once the tower's expected high service charges are factored in.

The building ranks as the world's tallest structure, beating out a television mast in North Dakota.

Early designs for the Burj had it edging out Taipei 101 by about 33 feet, said Bill Baker, the building's structural engineer.

"We weren't sure how high we could go," said Baker, of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. "It was kind of an exploration ... a learning experience."

Work began in 2004 and moved rapidly. At times, new floors were being added almost every three days. During the busiest construction periods, some 12,000 people worked at the tower each day, according to Emaar. Low-wage migrant workers from the Indian subcontinent provided much of the muscle.

The Burj is the centerpiece of a 500-acre development that officials hope will become a new central residential and commercial district in this sprawling and often disconnected city. It is flanked by dozens of smaller but new skyscrapers and the Middle East's largest shopping mall.

Associated Press

the frenzied boom years.

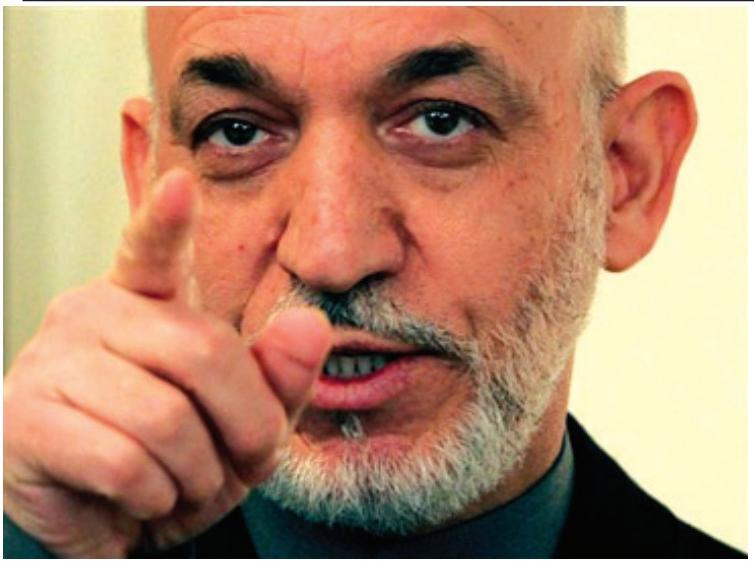
But like many overextended homeowners, the emirate and its state-backed companies borrowed too heavily and then struggled to keep up with payments as the financial crisis intensified and credit markets froze up.

The sheikdom shocked global markets last year when it unexpectedly announced plans to reorganize its main state-run conglomerate Dubai World and sought new terms in repaying some \$26 billion in debt. It got some aid from Abu Dhabi's bailouts.

Dubai's hereditary ruler, Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, in recent months has increasingly spoken of the close relationship between the two emirates, declaring in November that "Dubai and Abu Dhabi are one" and will "be there for each other." Sheik Mohammed serves as vice president and prime minister of the UAE federation.

Analysts had questioned what Dubai might need to offer in exchange for the financial support it received from Abu Dhabi, which controls nearly all of the UAE's oil wealth. Abu Dhabi provided \$25 billion last year as Dubai's debt problems deepened.

"It's really quite remarkable to have to name your biggest and most memorable landmark after the living monarch of a neighboring emirate," said Christopher Davidson, a



Afghan President Hamid Karzai takes a question during a joint press conference with the NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, unseen, at the presidential palace in Kabul, Afghanistan on Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2009. Afghan President Hamid Karzai said Tuesday he has asked the interior ministry to investigate the killing of one of his young relatives in what was reportedly a family feud.

Associated Press

By JIM HEINTZ

Associated Press Writer

KABUL — A roadside bombing killed four U.S. service members — the first American combat deaths of the year in Afghanistan — while a British soldier died during a foot patrol elsewhere in the volatile south of the country, officials said Monday.

A statement from NATO's International Security Assistance Force said the explosion that killed the U.S.

service members took place Sunday in the south, but did not give further details on the location or the victims' branch of service.

Afghan insurgents are increasingly turning to improvised explosive devices in their fight against Afghan and international forces. Of the 304 U.S. military deaths in Afghanistan last year, 129 were caused by IEDs, according to a tally by The Associated Press.

The deaths are the first U.S. fatalities from hostile action in Afghanistan this year. One U.S. service member died of noncombat causes so far in 2010.

The British soldier died while on foot patrol Sunday in Helmand province, the British Ministry of Defense said.

The Afghan Defense Ministry said its soldiers killed 10 Taliban fighters in battles Sunday in northern Kunduz province's Imam Sahib district, which borders Tajikistan. One soldier was wounded in the clash.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Monday ordered parliament to postpone its winter recess until a new list of Cabinet nominees is announced, following last week's stinging rejection of most of his choices.

The rejection by lawmakers of 17 of 24 nominees was a surprising slap and an obstacle to Karzai getting his second term in office into full

operation and focusing on badly needed reforms.

Karzai's credibility both at home and abroad was shaken by the fraud-plagued presidential elections in August.

In the vote on the Cabinet nominees Saturday, lawmakers rejected nominees viewed as Karzai's political cronies, those believed to be under the influence of warlords and others deemed unqualified. The parliament did approve his retention of incumbents in the key portfolios of defense, interior and finance.

The order, under a constitutional provision that allows the president to call extraordinary sessions of parliament, states that Karzai will introduce a new slate of Cabinet nominees within a few days. Karzai clearly hopes to have a full government in place before the Jan. 28 international conference in London on Afghanistan. □

Also Monday, NATO said a joint Afghan-international force discovered a huge cache of marijuana and turned it over to police for destruction. NATO said the cache contained up to 28,000 cubic feet (800 cubic meters) of marijuana — the equivalent of about seven standard semitrailers.

As the U.S. and other Western nations have tried to help Afghanistan stamp out its poppy fields — the country is the world's leading opium producer — an increasing number of farmers have turned to marijuana, which is receiving less attention from authorities.

The Interior Ministry said 256 pounds (106 kilograms) of heroin were seized Sunday in an operation in Badakhshan province, and 4,100 pounds (1,900 kilograms) of opium were incinerated Sunday in Helmand province in a joint operation of counternarcotics police and U.S. Marines. □

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Tourists and local fans will remember Steinfeld for past performances, in Aruba,



and on network television, Mr. Steinfeld recently authored "the Houdini Conspiracy", aka "Houdini Lives!", a collaborated work with new england mystery writer

Al Blanchard, he believes will be turned into a feature film.

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Seoul buried in heaviest snowfall in 70 years

**HYUNG-JIN KIM,
Associated Press Writer**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Seoul residents slogged through the heaviest snowfall in modern Korean history after a winter storm dumped more than 11 inches (28 centimeters) Monday, forcing airports to cancel flights and paralyzing traffic in South Korea's bustling capital.

The snow and icy roads snarled traffic in and out of Seoul, and at least three people died in traffic accidents. Many commuters squeezed into packed subways to get to work, and a Cabinet meeting was delayed because ministers were stuck in traffic.

The snowfall, which continued through Monday afternoon, was the heaviest in a single day since Korea began conducting meteorological surveys in 1937, the state weather agency said.

Gimpo International Airport in western Seoul canceled 224 flights before resuming service Monday afternoon when the snowfall stopped, airport official Choi Choon-ja said.

More than 20 flights between Incheon International Airport, just west of Seoul, to cities in China also coping with snowfall were canceled. More than 100 flights to other regions were delayed, Incheon airport official Kang Soo-kyung said.

In southern South Korea, three people were killed in a traffic accident blamed on icy roads, according to the Yonhap news agency. However, officials said no deaths or serious property damage was directly related to the heavy

snowfall.

About 3,600 workers and 5,000 soldiers were mobilized to clear the snow in Seoul and surrounding Gyeonggi Province, officials said.

The snow and freezing temperatures didn't stop 50-year-old Park Hee-soon from delivering milk and yogurt to homes and offices in western Seoul. However, Park — trudging through the streets in her regular yellow uniform — said the snow and ice were dangerous.

"I slipped on streets several times today, and my back hurts because of that," she said.

The snow forced American figure skater Michelle Kwan to cancel appearances in South Korea on Monday. The five-time world champion, visiting the country as goodwill ambassador for the U.S. State Department, had been slated to give a master class to South Korean figure skaters.

She is scheduled to meet with students, U.S. soldiers and participate in a Special Olympics event this week, U.S. Embassy officials said.

Beijing also was digging out Monday from a weekend winter storm.

More than 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) of snow accumulated in the city center Sunday, according to China's National Meteorological Center. State media called it the highest snowfall in the capital in a single day in January since 1951. Upward of 8 inches (20 centimeters) was recorded in the suburbs of Changping near the Great Wall of China.



South Koreans shovel away snow in downtown Seoul, South Korea, Monday, Jan. 4, 2010. Thousands of workers in the South Korean capital are battling the city's heaviest snowfall in nine years. The snow has caused massive flight cancellations and seriously snarled road traffic.

Associated Press

Hundreds of flights from Beijing were canceled or delayed Sunday because of the snowfall.

Primary and middle schools were closed in Beijing and the nearby port of Tianjin, and with snow plows in short supply, more than 300,000 people were assigned to clear snow in the capital with shovels, scrapers and brooms.

Heavy snow also blanketed Sapporo on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido, forcing the main airport

to cancel nearly 80 flights since last Wednesday. In South Korea, not everyone was complaining.

"It's something unique in Seoul," Kang Kyung-hye, a 58-year-old housewife, said after taking a photo of the snow-covered statue of 15th-century ruler King Sejong downtown.

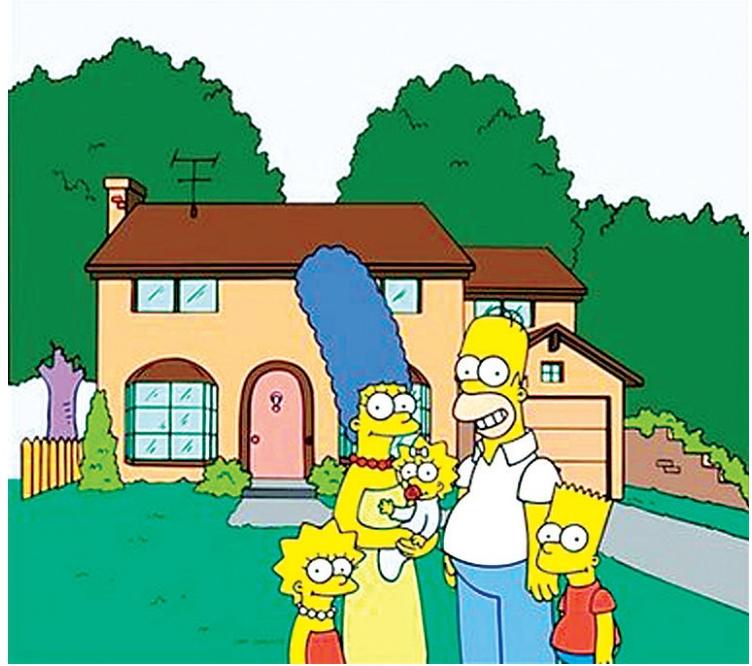
Nearby, dozens of police in neon uniforms used shovels and shields to clear away the snow and helped push cars stuck in snowdrifts. □



KEEP ARUBA CLEAN...



The Simpsons' marks 450th episode with special



FILE - This undated image made available by Fox Broadcasting Co. shows the cartoon family the Simpsons, from left: Lisa, Marge, Maggie, Homer and Bart, posing in front of their home. On Sunday, Jan. 10, 2010 on Fox, 'The Simpsons' is airing its 450th episode.

(AP Photo/Fox Broadcasting Co.)

"Omigod! Another 20? We'll TRY," he chortled. "We'll do our BEST!"

Here's hoping the spectacular ensemble of voice talent keeps talking to the end. After 20 years, Dan Castellaneta remains full-throated as portly, dimwitted dad Homer, Julie Kavner is tower-tressed mom Marge, Nancy Cartwright is lippy first-born Bart and Yeardley Smith is oversmart daughter Lisa.

Of course, these off-screen stars of "The Simpsons" are well served by visual artistry that, among things, keeps them shielded from the passage of time.

The show's writers play a huge role, too, with fastidiously crafted scripts that, by comparison, leave most sitcoms in the dust. (Granted, some fans may complain "The Simpsons" isn't as sharply realized as in earlier years, but still.)

"What I love about 'The Simpsons' is, it's so collaborative," Smith said. "The actors do a third, the animators do a third and the writers do a third. That's how I see it."

Also part of the acting troupe is Hank Azaria, a go-to guy for numerous characters including police Chief Wiggum, Comic Book Guy and convenience-store owner Apu Nahasapeemapetilon. Rounding out the core cast is Harry Shearer, whose

stable of roles includes Mr. Burns, Waylon Smithers, Ned Flanders, Reverend Lovejoy, Kent Brockman, Dr. Hibbert and Principal Skinner.

Besides "The Simpsons," Shearer, 66, is best-known from his role as bassist Derek Smalls in the 1984 mock musical documentary "This Is Spinal Tap," and subsequently in the real-life group that film inspired.

But Shearer, who began his career as a child actor on such early TV series as Jack Benny's weekly show, keeps a multiplicity of projects under way. These currently include a new DVD, "Unwigged & Unplugged," reteaming him musically with Tap bandmates Michael McKean and Christopher Guest. He hosts his own signature channel on the "My Damn Channel" comedy Web site.

And for a quarter-century, he has churned out "Le Show," a mostly solo act of wry humor, satirical sketches and blistering commentary, plus music (some performed by his singer-songwriter wife, Judith Owen).

"Le Show" is available through numerous radio and Web outlets, and by podcast. It's a weekly passion project that Shearer has always done gratis — which means he's free from any vexing business entanglements.

"I never have a meeting, I never see a memo," he says. "It's between me and my audience."

Sipping an early morning orange juice during a Manhattan stopover a couple of weeks ago, Shearer describes "Le Show" as a place for him to give voice to whatever's on his mind.

"I'm an insatiable news junkie," he says, "so the reading that I do, I would do anyway. The show just gives me a way to answer back."

The sensibility of "Le Show," and much of Shearer's creative output, is conveniently echoed by "The Simpsons," even though he plays no part in its writing.

"Matt has a satirical, anti-authority streak," says Shearer. "From the beginning, 'The Simpsons' was taking the side of the family against

all the authority figures and institutions that buffeted them in the modern world. Certainly, that resonated for me."

Shearer recalls the show's first script, whose characters assigned to him were highlighted in yellow. In the next script, other characters' dialogue would be highlighted for him.

Much of the time, he didn't see drawings of the new characters until months after he had created their voices, when the episode was finished: "Oh, THAT'S what he looks like!" How many different voices has Shearer done on "The Simpsons" in all?

"The one real influence that Bob Dylan has had on my life is that, every time I'm asked that question, I give a different answer," says Shearer. "So: hundreds," he replies in a raspy Dylan-esque voice.

As the years passed, Shearer's many voices were part of the emerging world of Springfield, an oblivious community that seemed satisfied to settle for less in nearly everything: public education; organized religion; TV news and kids programming; government, law enforcement, business, and food and drink intake; and certainly environmental issues, such as the nuclear power plant that employs Homer Simpson, of all people, as a safety inspector.

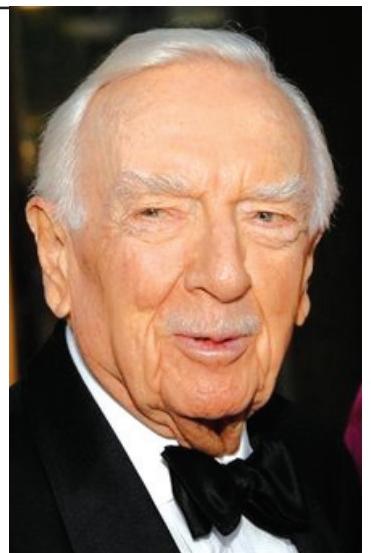
What's the message of "The Simpsons"? That people, for all their highfalutin talk, are willing to settle for less if it's easier or saves them a buck?

Has "The Simpsons" taken on a new, unexpected relevance thanks to the current economic downturn, when standards for everything seem under threat?

"You look around and the only person who ostentatiously and repeatedly proclaims his pursuit of excellence is Rush Limbaugh," says Shearer, then does a perfect imitation of Limbaugh: "I'm presenting broadcast excellence."

"That's got to tell you something," Shearer says. "Everybody ELSE is just getting by."

But he, unlike most people taking stock of "The Simpsons" at this moment in its run, resists any grandiose claims for its legacy. □



FILE - In this photo taken on Sept. 24, 2007, former news anchor Walter Cronkite arrives at the Metropolitan Opera 2007-08 season opening gala. (AP Photo/Evan Agostini, File)

Morgan Freeman replaces Cronkite on CBS voiceover

By DAVID BAUDER,
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK — Nearly six months after Walter Cronkite's death, his voice is leaving the "CBS Evening News."

His introduction of anchor Katie Couric was replaced Monday by a voiceover featuring actor Morgan Freeman.

The legendary CBS News anchor recorded the introduction, played at the beginning of most newscasts, when Couric started at CBS in 2006. Cronkite's voice was kept on the air even after his death July 17.

"As comforting as it is to look back on the great career that Walter had, we're looking forward now and we just felt it was the right time to make the move that at some point had to be made," said CBS News and Sports President Sean McManus. "This seemed like the appropriate time since Walter's passing to make the move."

Having Freeman on board gives CBS the flexibility to record different intros when Couric has special reports and is on location, he said.

CBS has replaced Cronkite with a generic voice over the past few months when it wanted to highlight something special.

The change also gives the network more consistency, McManus said. □

BUSINESS

Aruba TODAY

New year, old worries for U.S. stocks



A trader pauses to view price monitors on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange just before the close of the final trading session of 2009 December 31, 2009.

REUTERS/Mike Segar

By Edward Krudy

NEW YORK (Reuters) – U.S. stocks closed out 2009 with the best performance in six years, but monthly employment figures in the first week of the new year will keep investors focused on what is likely to be 2010's reality -- the economy's struggle to recover.

On the data front, the main event will be Friday's report from the Labor Department on U.S. non-farm payrolls in December. Economists polled by Reuters have forecast that payrolls shed 20,000 jobs in the final month of 2009, compared with just 11,000 lost in November.

The Institute for Supply Management's report on manufacturing, due on Monday, is expected to show the ailing sector was still slow to expand in December, while a projected drop in November pending home sales, due on Tuesday, will underscore the housing market's shaky recovery.

Major factors in the stock market's 2009 rally have been ultra-low interest rates and the Federal Reserve's purchases of securities. A repeat of November's much better-than-expected unemployment report could cause investors to worry that the Fed will increase borrowing costs sooner than

previously thought.

Thomas Wilson, managing director of institutional investments at Brinker Capital in Berwyn, Pennsylvania, said the unwinding of the fiscal and monetary stimulus, possibly in the second half of 2010, will be a "delicate and deliberate process" that could ruffle markets.

Expectations that interest rates may rise sooner than expected have been helping the U.S. dollar recently, which could make a sustained move higher -- if expectations for higher rates increase further.

The stock market moved inversely to the dollar through most of 2009. A continued bounce in the greenback in 2010 could hurt stocks.

"The market's reaction to the generally stronger dollar is going to dictate a lot of the investment themes for the first half of 2010 and maybe the year at large," said Bruce Zaro, chief technical strategist at Delta Global Advisors in Boston.

A TURNAROUND YEAR

Despite a 65 percent gain in the S&P 500 from its 12-year closing low in early March, stock investors have lost money this decade when total returns are taken into account. Few will be overwhelmed with the long-term performance of

their portfolios.

As 2009 ended, Wall Street capped its first-ever negative decade on a total return basis, even with dividends reinvested.

Nevertheless, investors will remember 2009 as the year that the U.S. stock market made a substantial turnaround from its plunge in 2008 when fallout from the implosion of subprime mortgages and the credit crisis forced Lehman Brothers into bankruptcy -- changing the landscape of Wall Street forever.

For 2009, the Dow Jones industrial average (.DJI) climbed 18.8 percent, the S&P 500 (.SPX) shot up 23.5 percent and the Nasdaq (.IXIC) surged 43.9 percent.

JOBS, RATES AND HOUSING

Friday's non-farm payroll report is expected to confirm that U.S. job losses continued to bottom out in December. The data is also likely to reinforce expectations that the U.S. unemployment rate will peak in the first half of next year.

The unemployment rate is expected to edge up to 10.1 percent in December after it unexpectedly fell to 10 percent the month before.

In December, the Fed stuck to its commitment to keep interest rates close to zero for an "extended period." Some investors took November's unemployment number as a sign that rates may need to rise faster. That debate could start again if Friday's number is better than expected.

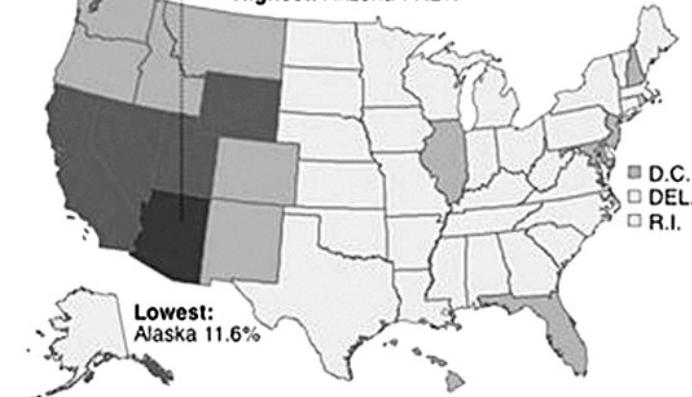
Better economic data "will raise concerns about the possibility the Fed will tighten earlier than most investors anticipate, but given what we're hearing from the Federal Reserve, it seems unlikely," said Carmine Grigoli, chief U.S. investment strategist at Mizuho Securities in New York. □

Arizona leads bankruptcy increase

Bankruptcy filings boomed nationwide last year compared to 2008, with state increases ranging from 11 to 77 percent.

Percent Increase In filings last year compared to 2008

10 to 30 31 to 50 51 to 70 71 to 90
Highest: Arizona 77.2%



SOURCE: Public Access to Court Electronic Records

AP

FILE - In this July 22, 2009 photo, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington. The Federal Reserve on Monday, Dec. 28, 2009, proposed allowing banks to set up the equivalent of certificates of deposit at the central bank, a move aimed at helping the Fed reel in an unprecedented amount of money plowed into the economy during the financial crisis.

(AP Photo/Gerald Herbert, file)

Fed: Regulation 1st defense against speculation

By JEANNINE AVERSA,

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON – Stronger regulation is the best way to prevent financial speculation from getting out of hand and throwing the economy in a new crisis, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said Sunday.

But he didn't rule out higher interest rates to stop new speculative investment bubbles from forming.

The Fed chief's remarks were his most extensive on the subject since the housing market's tumble led to the gravest financial crisis since World War II — and perhaps the worst in modern history, in his view.

Critics blame the Fed for feeding that speculative boom in housing by holding interest rates too low for too long after the 2001 recession.

But Bernanke, in a speech to the American Economic Association's annual meeting in Atlanta, defended the central bank's actions. Extra-low rates were needed to get the economy and job creation back to full throttle after the Sept. 11 attacks and accounting scandals that rocked Wall Street, he said.

Bernanke said the direct links were weak between super-low interest rates and the rapid rise in house prices that occurred at roughly the same time. The stance of interest rates during that period "does not appear to have been inappropriate," he said. Still, the enormous economic damage from the housing bust — the longest and deepest recession since the 1930s and double-digit unemployment — shows how important it is to guard against a repeat, Bernanke said.

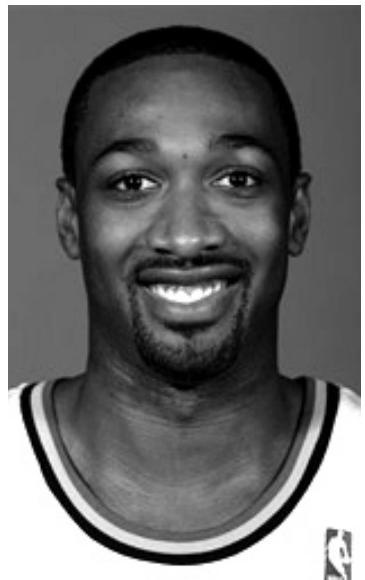
"All efforts should be made to strengthen our regulatory system to prevent a recurrence of the crisis, and to cushion the effects if another crisis occurs," he said. □

SPORTS

Aruba TODAY



Arenas meets with authorities on guns in locker



In this Sept. 26, 2008 file photo, Washington Wizards' Gilbert Arenas is shown NBA basketball media day for the Wizards in Washington.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Washington Wizards star Gilbert Arenas says he took unloaded guns from his locker in a “misguided effort to play a joke” on a teammate.

Arenas released a written statement Monday after meeting with law enforcement officials. And Arenas’ lawyer says the player voluntarily met with prosecutors and detectives and answered every question during a two-hour interview.

In his statement, Arenas repeated his earlier assertion that he brought four guns to the Verizon Center to store in his locker in order to get them out of his house and away from his children. He said he mistakenly believed that recent changes in D.C. law made it legal for him to store unloaded guns there.

Arenas said he took the unloaded guns out of his locker on Dec. 21 “in a misguided effort to play a joke on a teammate.” He denied threatening or assaulting anyone.

The New York Post has reported that Arenas and teammate Javaris Crittenton drew guns on each other.

“Joke or not, I now recognize that what I did was a mistake and was wrong,” Arenas said. “I should not have brought the guns to DC in the first place, and I now realize that there’s no such thing as joking around when it comes to guns — even if unloaded.”

Two officials within the league who have been briefed on the investigation told The Associated Press on Saturday that the incident stemmed from a dispute over card-playing gambling debts and a heated discussion in the locker room.

The other player involved is Javaris Crittenton. His agent, Mark Bartelstein, said earlier Monday that his client did nothing wrong.

It was unclear whether Crittenton also planned to meet with authorities about the incident. His lawyer, Peter White, is on

vacation and said he would not be at any meetings Monday or Tuesday.

Arenas also apologized for his actions in the statement.

“I am very sorry for the effect that my serious lapse in judgment has had on my team, my teammates, the National Basketball Association and its fans,” Arenas said. “I want to apologize to everybody for letting them down with my conduct, and I promise to do better in the future.”

NBA commissioner David Stern likely will wait until the legal process is complete before handing down penalties, but he could rule on Arenas now since league rules were broken in that instance.

At the NBA’s request, the firearms language was bolstered during collective bargaining in 2005. Players are subject to discipline if they bring guns to the arena or practice facility, or even an offsite promotional appearance. □



American Andy Roddick reacts to a line call in his match against Peter Luczak of Australia during the Brisbane International Tennis Tournament in Brisbane, Australia, Monday, Jan. 4, 2010. Roddick won the match 7-6, 6-2.

Associated Press

Roddick overpowers Luczak in Brisbane

BRISBANE, Australia (AFP) — Top seeded American Andy Roddick used his booming serve to overpower a brave Peter Luczak of Australia 7-6 (7/5), 6-2 in the first round of the Brisbane International on Monday.

World number seven Roddick was forced to dig deep against an inspired Luczak, who matched the American shot for shot throughout the first set.

Luczak then had a mini-break in the first set tie-break but was unable to convert and Roddick fought back with his huge serve to claim the opening set.

Roddick then lifted his play a notch to break his opponent twice in the second set and ease his way into the second round. □

Holyfield WBF title attempt in Uganda postponed

GODFREY OLUKYA

Associated Press Writer

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP) — Evander Holyfield’s WBF heavyweight title bout against South African Francois Botha in Uganda has been postponed from January to late February to give the boxers and organizers more time to prepare, the fight’s promoter said Monday.

Pro Box Promotions manager Eddie Bazira said the fight will now be held Feb. 20 instead of the originally scheduled Jan. 16 date.

“We have realized that we need more time to publicize the event regionally and worldwide and also to give the fighters ample time to prepare themselves,” Bazira said. “I assure the world that the fight will take place.”

The aging American fighter was also scheduled to fight Ethiopian-American boxer Sammy Retta in September



In this Aug. 18, 2006 file photo, Evander Holyfield waits in the ring before his fight against Jeremy Bates in their heavyweight boxing match in Dallas. Holyfield will fight Francois Botha in a heavyweight bout in Uganda on Jan. 16, 2010. The 47-year-old Holyfield has not fought since losing a decision to Nikolai Valuev a year ago.

Associated Press

in Ethiopia’s capital but promoters have postponed the fight several times and its venue is still undecided. Organizers for the fight at Kampala’s Nambole Stadium have predicted a crowd of 80,000 fans and the potential of a big pay-per-view payout for the cash-strapped Holyfield, a former four-time world champion who has won only five of his last 12 contests. Holyfield (42-10 with 2 draws) has not fought since losing a points decision to Nikolai Valuev a year ago. □

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Kansas still No. 1 in AP college basketball poll

By JIM O'CONNELL

AP Basketball Writer

Kansas, Texas, Kentucky and Purdue held the top four spots in The Associated Press' college basketball poll for the fourth straight week. Now, they are the only unbeaten teams left in Division I.

The Jayhawks (13-0) were again the runaway No. 1 on Monday, receiving 56 first-place votes from the 65-member national media panel.

Texas (13-0) was No. 1 on eight ballots, while Kentucky (15-0) had the remaining first-place vote.

Duke and Villanova moved up two spots to fifth and sixth, while Syracuse and West Virginia dropped to seventh and eighth. Syracuse and West Virginia each lost for the first time last week. North Carolina remained No. 9 and Michigan State moved up one spot to round out the top 10.

Four teams — Gonzaga, Georgia Tech, Pittsburgh and BYU — moved into the rankings from 19th to 25th.

Kansas State advanced one spot to 11th and was followed by Georgetown, Connecticut, Mississippi, New Mexico, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Florida State, Gonzaga and Georgia Tech. The last five ranked teams were Temple, Texas Tech, Pittsburgh, Washington and BYU.

Kansas beat Belmont 81-51 and then-No. 18 Temple 84-52 last week to increase its number of wins by at least 25 points to nine. The Jayhawks go on the road to face a ranked team again this week, No. 16 Tennessee on Sunday.

Gonzaga (11-3) fell out of the poll last week after a four-week run when the Bulldogs got as high as No. 15. They have won three straight since the 76-41 loss to Duke, including an 85-83 overtime win at Illinois on Saturday.

Georgia Tech (11-2) kept its poll routine in check by returning to the rankings at No. 20. The Yellow Jackets, who have won three straight since an overtime loss to Florida

State, were ranked for two weeks, dropped out for two weeks, returned for two weeks, then were out the last two weeks.

Pittsburgh (12-2) moved into the Top 25 on a five-game winning streak, the last an 82-72 victory at Syracuse on Saturday. The Panthers lost four starters from the team that was ranked all last season, reaching No. 1 for three weeks.

BYU (14-1) was ranked for one week last season. The Cougars moved in at No. 25 this week having won nine straight since losing 71-61 at Utah State. BYU has scored at least 80 points in nine games this season, including the last five straight that featured a 99-69 win at Arizona.

Ohio State, Clemson, UAB and Northwestern dropped out of the Top 25.

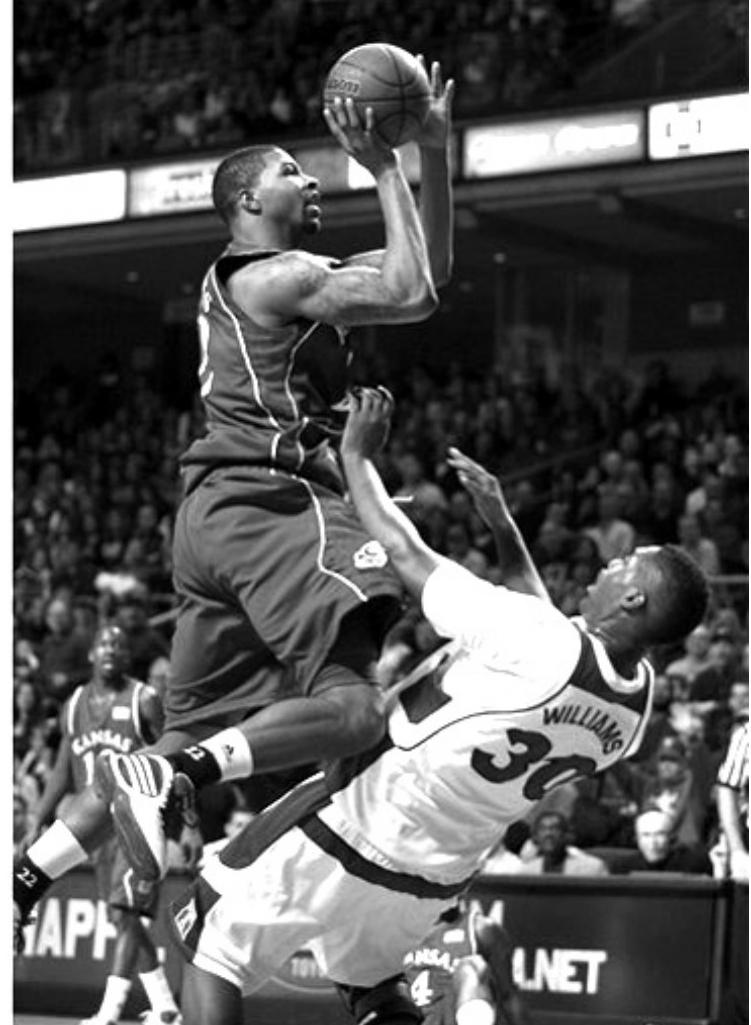
The Buckeyes (10-4) fell from 15th following losses last week to Wisconsin and Michigan. Ohio State, which was ranked every week since the preseason poll, was 7-1 when leading scorer Evan Turner broke bones in his back when he fell dunking. He might not return until early February.

Clemson (12-3) dropped out from 21st following Sunday night's 74-53 loss at Duke. The Tigers were ranked a total of six weeks this season.

UAB (12-2) moved into the poll last week for the first time since March 2006, and the visit was short. The Blazers fell from 24th after losing 72-63 to Virginia and beating Arkansas 73-72.

Northwestern's time in the Top 25 was as short as UAB's, even if the wait was much longer. The Wildcats (10-3) moved into the poll at No. 25 last week, their first ranking since January 1969, but they lost to Illinois and Michigan State.

There are five games involving ranked teams against each other this week and Wisconsin is in two: Wednesday at Michigan State and Saturday against Purdue. The others are Connecticut at Georgetown and Duke at Georgia Tech on Saturday and Kansas visiting Tennessee on Sunday. □



Kansas' Marcus Morris, left, shoots over and Temple's Craig Williams (30) in the first half of an NCAA college basketball game Saturday, Jan. 2, 2010, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press



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U.S., Canada advance to world junior final



Team USA's Jerry D'Amigo sends the puck past Team Sweden goalie Jacob Markstrom during the third period of a semifinal in the world junior hockey championships Sunday, Jan. 3, 2010, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

SASKATOON, Saskatchewan – RPI star Jerry D'Amigo scored two goals, the second short-handed, and the United States beat Sweden 5-2

on Sunday night to set up a title showdown against Canada in the world junior championship.

"The plays just came to

me today," D'Amigo said. "Luckily, my teammates fed me the puck and I found a way to put it in the back of the net."

Associated Press

In the first semifinal, Taylor Hall scored twice, and Jake Allen made 20 saves in five-time defending champion Canada's 6-1 victory over Switzerland.

The championship game is Tuesday night.

"That's going to be a fun game," D'Amigo said. "I've been looking forward to it. The championship game is going to be a battle. We'll play hard-nosed, try to get the puck deep, try to bury some early, and get on top."

The United States reached the championship game for the first time since beating Canada in the 2004 final in Finland. On Thursday night in the Group A finale, Canada rallied to beat the United States 5-4 in a shootout.

"They play a great game and have experienced and skilled guys," U.S. forward Jason Zucker said. "Nobody really expects us to win because Canada has won five times in a row, but we're going out there to give our best and hopefully win the gold medal."

Tyler Johnson, John Carlson and A.J. Jenks also scored for

the Americans, and Mike Lee made 27 saves. Anton Lander scored twice for Sweden.

Carlson broke a 2-2 tie with 7:26 left when his shot from the blue line bounced under goalie Jacob Markstrom. D'Amigo added a short-handed goal with 3:28 left.

"They scored too easily on us," Swedish coach Par Marts said. "I don't know who to blame but myself."

Swedish captain Marcus Johansson received a major penalty and game misconduct for elbowing D'Amigo in the head early in the third, but Sweden managed to kill off the lengthy penalty before the U.S. pulled ahead on Carlson's goal.

In the first semifinal, Marco Scandella scored short-handed, and Jordan Eberle, Brayden Schenn and Stefan Della Rovere added goals to help Canada reach the final for the ninth straight year.

"It's very special," Hall said. "When you're put in that position, you do everything you can to achieve it. This is the opportunity of a lifetime for us, just to get to the final. To win that sixth goal medal would be unbelievable."

Eberle had a power-play goal in the first period to tie John Tavares' career Canadian goals record with 12. The Regina Pats star also matched Jason Allison for second place on the career Canadian points list with 24.

Mauro Jorg scored for Switzerland, a 3-2 overtime winner over Russia in the quarterfinals Saturday night.

"We played well, but our strength was down, our batteries were down after our game with the Russians," Swiss coach Jakob Koller said. "We wanted to keep it close for as long as possible. The short-handed goal hurt us too much to come back."

In relegation play, Tomas Knotek scored three goals in the Czech Republic's 10-2 victory over Latvia. □

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"FAVI FUNDACION CU VISION"

Redskins fire coach Jim Zorn after 4-12 season

JOSEPH WHITE

AP Sports Writer

ASHBURN, Virginia (AP) — Jim Zorn was fired as coach of the Washington Redskins on Monday after the team completed its worst season in 15 years. Zorn was informed of his dismissal shortly after the team returned following Sunday's season-ending 23-20 loss at San Diego.

"No one in the organization is satisfied with our record over the last two years," team owner Dan Snyder said in a statement, "and I am sure that Jim would concur with that statement. It has been painful for him, too. I certainly accept responsibility for mistakes that I have made. I am hopeful that our fans will accept my commitment and pledge to deliver a franchise that can compete in the NFC East every season."

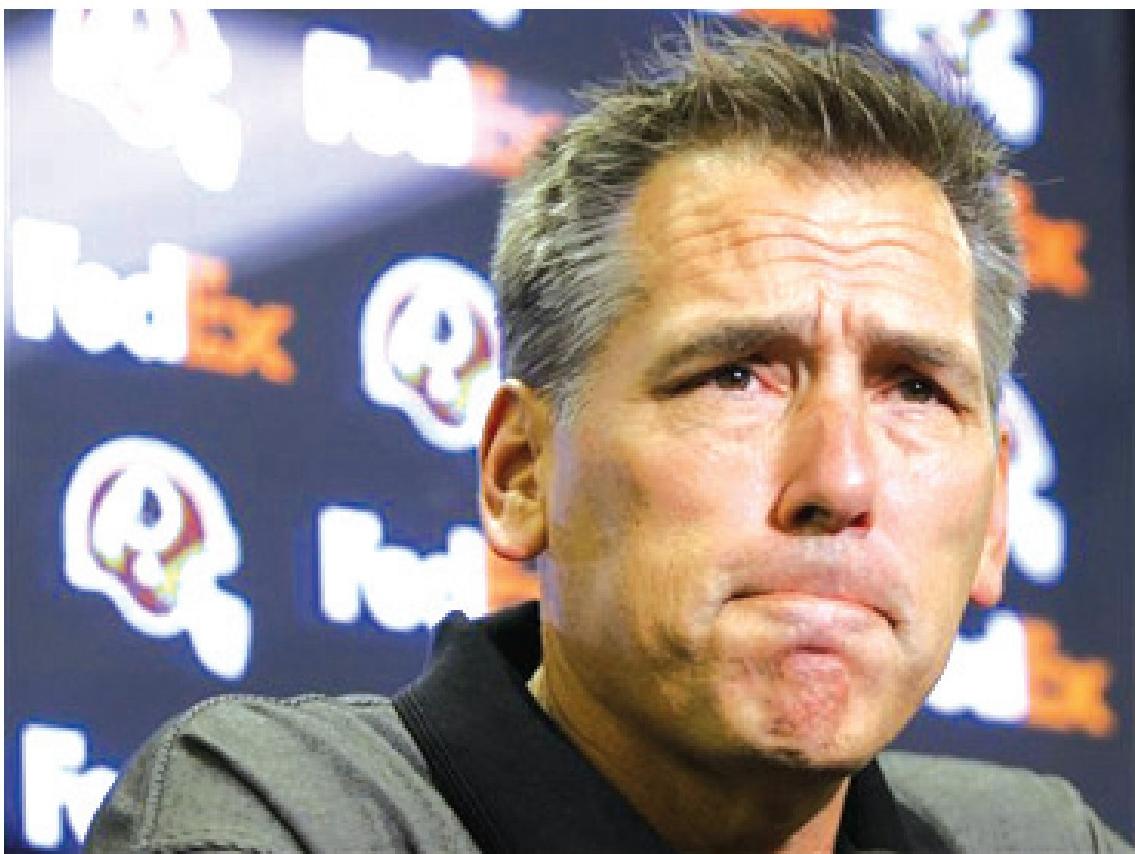
Zorn went 12-20 over two seasons, but he lost 18 of his last 24 games after a 6-2 start in 2008. The Redskins struggled

early despite a weak schedule this season and finished 4-12, their worst record since 1994. "The status quo is not acceptable," general manager Bruce Allen said in a separate statement. "I felt it was necessary to not waste a moment of time to begin building this team into a winner."

Former Denver Broncos coach Mike Shanahan is considered the favorite to replace Zorn. Zorn's replacement will be Washington's seventh coach since Snyder bought the team in 1999.

"Bruce Allen spent many hours examining the football operations, and we are both determined to do whatever it takes to build a championship team," Snyder said. "That process begins today."

Zorn's dismissal had been expected for months. The front office stripped him of his play-calling duties in late October, and Snyder has interviewed assistant coach Jerry Gray for



E - This is an Oct. 19, 2009, file photo showing Washington Redskins head coach Jim Zorn during a news conference at Redskins Park in Ashburn, Va. Zorn was fired by the Washington Redskins early Monday, Jan. 4, 2009, the first step in yet another team overhaul under owner Dan Snyder.

Associated Press

the job weeks ago.

The new coach, Snyder and Allen will have a monumental

task to rebuild a team with many roster deficiencies and major questions at offensive

line, quarterback and running back.

Zorn, who had never previously been a head coach or coordinator in the NFL, wasn't even on Snyder's list of candidates when Joe Gibbs retired at the end of the 2007 season. Zorn became a last-minute option when other contenders either showed no interest, dropped out or were deemed unsatisfactory. Snyder initially hired Zorn to be the offensive coordinator, then promoted him to head coach two weeks later after an extensive interview. □

AP source: Bills fire entire coaching staff

JOHN WAWROW,

AP Sports Writer

ORCHARD PARK, New York (AP) — The Buffalo Bills opened their offseason with a purge by firing interim coach Perry Fewell and the rest of his staff on Monday. Though Fewell was dismissed, he will still interview for the team's vacant head coaching job, a person familiar with the decisions told The Associated Press. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the team has not announced the dismissals.

The shakeup came a day after the Bills (6-10) closed their season with a 30-7 win over the Indianapolis Colts. FoxSports.com first reported the firings.

Days after firing head coach Dick Jauron in November, Bills owner Ralph Wilson had said no job was safe as he was preparing to revamp his entire front office once the season ended.

The overhaul already began last week, when national scout Buddy Nix was promoted to general manager, filling a



spot that had been filled by the team's chief operating officer Russ Brandon, who had no football background.

The Bills closed their 50th season by missing the playoffs for a 10th straight year, and capping a decade in which they enjoyed only one winning season — a 9-7 finish

in 2004.

Fewell, the team's defensive coordinator, finished with a 3-4 record as the interim coach. Except for highly respected special teams coordinator Bobby April, most of the Bills assistants, including Fewell, had been hired by Jauron. The timing of the shakeup

comes as the Bills embark on their fifth coaching search since Hall of Famer Marv Levy retired after the 1997 season.

Former Steelers coach Bill Cowher has been mentioned as a candidate. Several media outlets, including ESPN and The Buffalo News, have reported the Bills have spoken to Cowher. □

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Cowboys win NFC East; Ravens, Jets reach playoffs

By BARRY WILNER

AP Football Writer

Dallas won a division title, Baltimore and the New York Jets earned wild-card spots, and the Super Bowl champs were eliminated on the final day of the NFL season.

Next week's first round will include three rematches of games Sunday. The playoffs won't include the defending champion Pittsburgh Steelers, who lost out tiebreakers.

They will include the Jets, who beat two teams already in the postseason to secure the No. 5 seed in the AFC. The Jets routed the AFC North champion Bengals 37-0 in probably the final game at Giants Stadium, one week after the Colts benched many starters in the second half and saw New York rally to beat them.

So the Jets (9-7) will head to Cincinnati for a replay next Saturday to open the playoffs. New York's win denied Houston a berth.

"This wasn't our goal to make the playoffs. Our goals are much higher," Jets coach Rex Ryan said. "We were 4-6 and we had a mission with the team. It went from impossible to improbable,



Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb (5) is sacked by Dallas Cowboys linebackers Bobby Carpenter (54), Keith Brooking (51) and Anthony Spencer (93) in the second half of an NFL football game Sunday, Jan. 3, 2010, in Arlington, Texas. The Cowboys shutout the Eagles 24-0.

Associated Press

back to impossible and then to inevitable."

The Ravens (9-7) grabbed

an AFC spot when they beat Oakland 21-13. Baltimore will visit AFC East winner New

England on Sunday.

The AFC playoff picture was all jumbled going into the day. It got sorted out very cleanly — the two win-and-in teams, Baltimore and the Jets, both won.

Tony Romo and the Cowboys romped over Philadelphia 24-0 to win the NFC East. And they will play again at Cowboys Stadium next Saturday night. Kurt Warner and the Cardinals will host the Packers next Sunday to conclude the wild-card round. Green Bay (11-5) beat them 33-7 Sunday. Arizona (10-6) will be the NFC's fourth seed for the second straight year.

There also will be no cold-weather games in the second round. Hosts Minnesota, New Orleans and Indianapolis play inside domes, and San Diego is the other site.

For the second straight year, the Eagles-Cowboys showdown was a rout. This time, Dallas did the damage.

Dallas swept Philadelphia this season to earn the division crown, dropping the Eagles to the sixth seed, both at 11-5.

"They're going to know us, we're going to know them," Romo said. "After winning like we did today, we're probably going to see a completely different team next week because I don't think they liked what they saw today. That's why I think we're going to see every blitz ever invented."

A year ago, the Eagles kept the Cowboys out of the postseason with a 44-6 victory in the season finale. That gave Philly a wild-card spot and the Eagles rode it to the NFC title game, where they led late before Arizona rallied to advance to the Super Bowl.

"It's kind of embarrassing," tight end Brent Celek said of the loss. "I didn't expect to come down here and play like this. We're lucky we have another opportunity to play again. That's all we can ask for."

Like the Jets, Baltimore began the season 3-0.

"We've had so many ups and

downs, we've had so many close games, and now we go forth 0-0," said linebacker Ray Lewis, whose Ravens lost in the AFC title game to Pittsburgh last January. "That's the type of message I was trying to tell my teammates before this game. In my 14 years, I've never had a pretty road to the playoffs. It's always been a grind, but there's no better thing than having that grind and getting to advance."

Minnesota's 44-7 blitz of the New York Giants gave Brett Favre and the Vikings (12-4) a first-round bye. New Orleans (13-3) is the NFC's No. 1 seed, but lost its final three games.

"I think it's proof of what we're capable of doing," said Favre, who completed 25 of 31 passes for 316 yards and four touchdowns in less than three quarters without a turnover. "Where it takes us from here, I have no idea. But it was definitely a momentum boost and confidence."

Indianapolis, which dropped its last two games, is the AFC's top seed at 14-2. San Diego (13-3) also has a bye and won its final 11 games.

Houston has never been to the playoffs and its 9-7 record this year makes for its first winning season. It beat AFC East winner New England 34-27 Sunday.

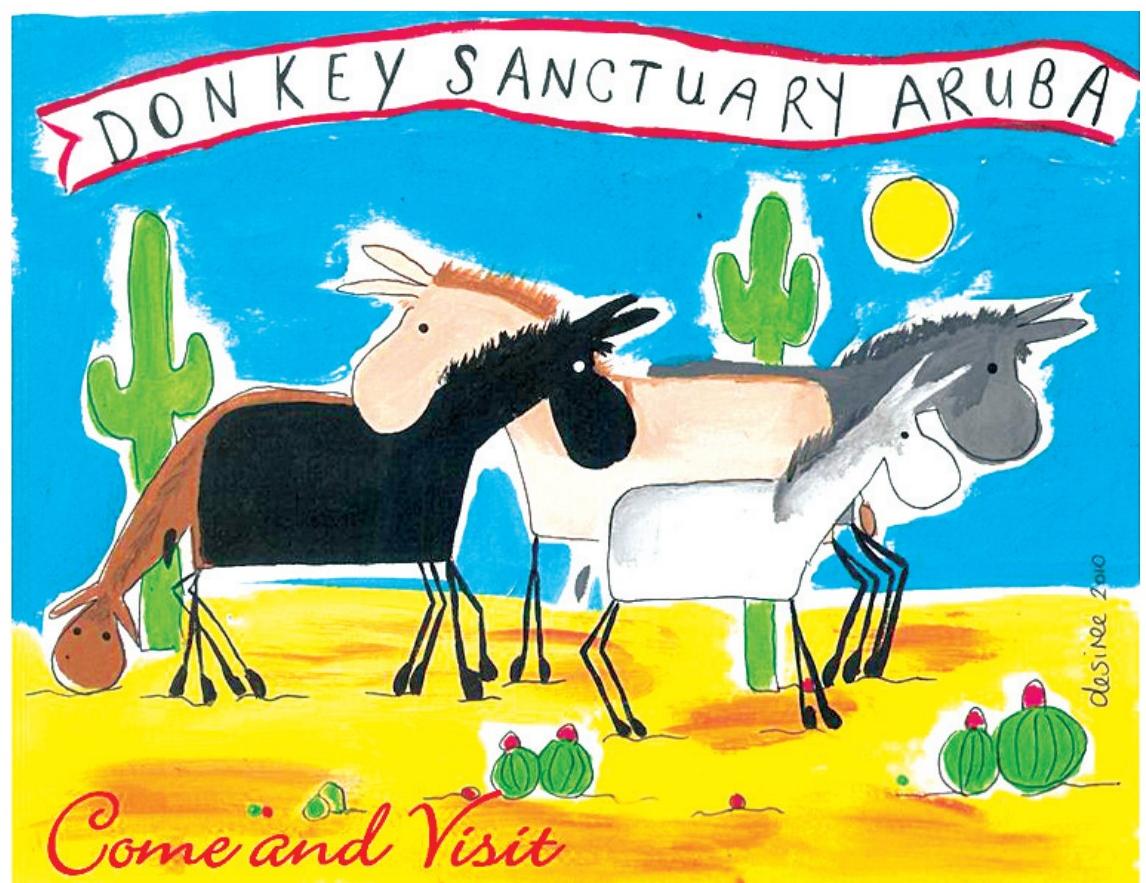
"I just started yelling," Texans star receiver Andre Johnson said of the winning record. "It was like a sigh of relief. This is something that I've been working for since I've been here."

The Bengals already own their division and rested some regulars, including running back Cedric Benson, for the night matchup with the Jets, who totally outplayed them in frigid weather.

"You've got to run the ball in this weather and play defense, and we do that better than anyone," Ryan said.

Out of the playoffs are the Steelers, who finished 9-7.

"I'd rather we go out with a win than a loss," said Ben Roethlisberger, who threw three touchdown passes in a 30-24 victory at Miami. □



LOCAL

Aruba TODAY



On Top Of The News

Email: news@arubatoday.com

Tuesday, January 5, 2010

Minister of Sports welcomes BMX Champion's return

Shanayah Howell wins "Christmas Day Classic" in the USA



ORANJESTAD – This week, the very well-known BMX Champion Shanayah Howell returned from winning the "Christmas Classic Day 1 & 2" in Louisville, Kentucky.



The competition was under the authority of the National Bicycle League" in the Broadbent Arena. More than 1,000 participants took part in this Christmas Day event. Shanayah, who is currently the title holder of American National Champion,

participated with nine other young girls representing different locations in the USA in the 10 year old category. Her next stop is the "Easter Classic" in the USA to defend her title.

Pictured is Minister of Sports

Dr. Richard Visser welcoming Aruba's tiniest champion Shanayah Howell together with her father and grandfather. Minister Visser encouraged Shanayah to keep up the good work and to continue to shine international for herself and the island of Aruba. □



Paseo Herencia rings in the New Year

Lighting the traditional "Pagara" for a prosperous New Year

PALM BEACH – On December 31st, the Paseo Herencia Mall celebrated with champagne and fireworks to ring in the New Year. The management of the mall lit the long Chinese Firework that started at one end of the mall and ended at the other, passing by all the stores, boutiques and restaurants spreading lots of noise, cheer from employees & patrons and most importantly bestowing good luck and prosperity for 2010.



Continued on Pages B8 & 9

Catch your own dinner with Driftwood!

Motto at Driftwood Restaurant: "From the pier to your plate!"

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the same day. Herby loves to share his fishing passion with the many visitors to the island. His fleet of a 35 ft. Twin Engine Bertram yacht and a 50 ft. Twin Engine Post yacht, appropriately called "Driftwood I and II, is available for charters on a daily basis from 8am to

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12 noon and from 1pm to 5pm. A charter includes: captain, mate, all fishing equipment, bait, sodas and bottled water. On a full day charter sandwiches and snacks are also included. You can call Herby directly at (297) 592 4040 or go to www.driftwoodaruba.com.

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Insurance Association of Aruba Annual General Meeting

IAA makes a Presentation on FATF commission report



ORANJESTAD - The Insurance Association of Aruba (IAA) held Annual General Meeting for its members as a luncheon meeting at Windows of Aruba to discuss different matters concerning all branches of the insurance industry.

An invited guest to this meeting was Ms. Penelope Tromp Gomez, manager, Supervision department from Central Bank of Aruba. She

was invited to let insurers know specifically how the report and findings from the FATF commission on Aruba are going to affect Aruba in general and the financial services industry in particular. Ms. Penelope advised that some 13 out of 16 core recommendations from the Commission are not complied with. Some of the key areas where we must place our future efforts are Criminality,

Drug trafficking, Anti money laundering, Customer due diligence, and increased international cooperation in the fields of legal assistance, police and extradition matters. Legislation has to be passed in Aruba at a short notice to make money laundering a separate criminal offense. It is widely believed that such money is often used to support terrorist activities.

Aruba will have a chance to present its repot and timeline of actions taken / to be taken during the next session in February 2010 in Abu Dhabi. Central Bank with relevant authorities in the Government is working hard to ensure that Aruba's name stays clear in this regard.

New guidelines will be issued and rigidly enforced to this effect and as financial sector, every insurance company is required to have personnel and policies in place to be able to abide by such guidelines.

The presentation was well received by the Insurers who also expressed understanding about the growing complexity in modern day financial world. On behalf of the Association, Prakash Gupta, President of IAA thanked Ms. Penelope for an informative presentation and invited colleague Mr. Detlef Hooyboer to present a

certificate of appreciation to her. On photo Ms. Penelope is seen receiving a certificate of appreciation with the present Board of the Association. Further, a certificate of appreciation was presented to Ms. Gwendeline Henriquez and Mr. Jos Solognier (not in the picture) for their excellent contribution to the IAA. □



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Repeat guest recognition at Divi Resort



PUNTA BRAVO - Loyal guests of Divi Resorts were recognized for their support of the island and its people at a festive gathering on December 30th, at the resort pool deck. The gathering recognized Jim & Pamela Minichiello, 12 years on the island, Mike



& Brenda Mc Donnell, 16 years, Gregory & Irene Mc Namara and their daughters Kaitlyn & Laurie, 11 years, Thomas & Deborah DeSanti, 11 years and Kim Powers & Edward Bradshaw, who have been coming back to Aruba and the Divi for a whopping 22 years.

The Aruba Tourism Authority presented the guests with certificates of distinction while Divi decorated them with especially made



Distinguished Visitor commemorative buttons. The festivities were attended by Managing Director Alex Nieuwmeyer, his wife Liza, also a resort reservation executive, General Manager Marin Bijl, Leisure Service Manager Francis Ridderstap and the Manager on Duty Yee-Ting Held, Rooms Operations Manager Osbaldo Correa, Concierge Vivian and Brisly, the Front Office Supervisor. Pictured here, memorable moments over Champagne and hors d'oeuvres. □



Party time for Ari!

Sponge Bob makes an appearance at birthday party



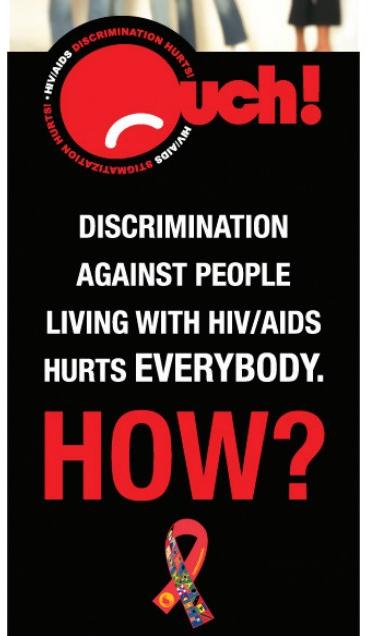
ORANJESTAD - Lots of happy kids enjoyed a fantastic Sponge Bob party at the home of the De Cuba family in celebration of the fourth birthday of Ari last Sunday. School friends from play school Debbie Doo were present

as well as family members on the spacious, festive, balloon festooned porch.

There were games and lots of goodies to eat, presents to win and a piñata,



all in honor of Ari, nephew of well-known designer Ronchi de Cuba. The children especially enjoyed the fun courtesy of Magali Party Center, the cotton candy, the hotdogs and guest of honor Sponge Bob. □



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Join the Garden Club of Aruba



BUSHIRI - Today January 5, 2010 at last Aruba has it's Garden Club.

Founder Roy Maduro Sr. a garden enthusiast himself, has always been keen on starting a Garden Club. His friend Dr. Johnny Lee from Trinidad was actually the catalyst behind this all, being himself one of the founders of the Trinidad & Tobago Garden Club.

The purpose of the Garden Club is to reunite people of the same interest and help each other with ideas for their garden and events.

The first meeting will be this evening at 7:00 o'clock at the Fantastic Gardens Aula in Bushiri. Anybody interested is cordially invited to the meeting. For more information please mail or call Roy Maduro, Cel: 592-2776 E-mail: arubagardenclub@yahoo.com



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HUMAN HINTS

Your Spirit Thinks Its Fun

I know how real this all feels, I'm in a physical body too. I am vulnerable to the grip of inescapable emotion just as we all are, and I have learned through experience that one way to dispel extreme emotion is to think of your Spirit's perspective of your life.

Physical life is all a fun game from our Spirit's point of view. The problem is that our Awareness is limited to the physical. We are slaves to the hormones and emotions of the physical body, which

are controlled by the body's physical surroundings. Spirit sees that positive and negative are an illusion, and are not subject to the forces of emotion and logic. To your spirit, there is no limit to the Infinite Thrill Ride of the three dimensional realm.

Expressing through a Human body is such a unique experience, there is no way your spirit wants to leave early. Shortcuts to Enlightenment miss the

entire point of this physical school of life. We are here to experience this Ride for everything its worth. The entire point of being in three dimensions is to experience it. We didn't come here to finish early. It takes an infinitely powerful force to stuff a Spirit Fragment into a three dimensional body. Now that we're here, our only obligation is to play life out to the fullest extent of our passion.

Taking life seriously is the reason we're in three dimensions. The physical classroom of life works because we think it's real. The three dimensional illusion falls apart when we stop taking it seriously. The instant we realize its not real, we see through it and release our emotions from the three dimensional stranglehold that presently controls us.

Here's another paradox. Our task in the physical is to take physical life seriously, to be passionate about the pursuit, but learning to NOT take life so seriously is one of Life's main lessons. We can take it seriously as physical creatures,

while remembering our spirit's perspective beyond separation. When

you're overcome by emotion, think of the Thrill Ride your Spirit is experiencing. This will help balance your outlook on daily events that entice your emotions. You will be able to take life seriously, while releasing your illusion of control.

The Spirit acting through your physical body is a Fragment of Unity that represents your personal energetic expression. Your Spirit knows that all people are from the same Unity, it knows that Separation is an illusion. The physical body that allows your Spirit to express in three dimensions thinks that Separation is real. Separation is the only reality that the physical body knows, and it is the only reality Humanity is aware of.

The next time emotion grips you, think of your Spirit's perspective. Remember that the aspect of yourself beyond Separation is having a fantastic time in the physical realm, relishing every infinite moment while

releasing it and allowing it to transform into the next.

Until Tomorrow...

Go to www.HumanHints.com to sign up to receive this column in your email each day.

~Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought. HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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		matinee: 12.00	2.00			
G	THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG	daily: 4.30				
		matinee: 12.00	2.15			
PG-13	2012	daily: 8.00				
		late show: 11.15				
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		matinee: 12.30	2.45			
PG-13	AVATAR 3D	daily: 4.45	8.00		late show: 11.15	3D
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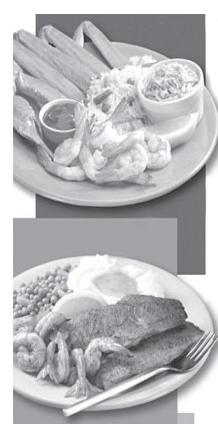
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Continued from Page B1
After the "pagara" finished popping its thousands and thousands of fireworks, each store and restaurant continued their own celebrations through out the evening culminating with



Paseo Herencia rings in the New Year



Moby Dick's lighting a stuffed with fireworks full-sized sailing puppet that was incinerated at midnight.
Pictures show Paseo Herencia Owner Dan Oduber and his

staff lighting the "Pagara" and the various other activities that happened through out the night. More fun and pictures to come in Aruba Today this week. □

Photos by Julia Renfro



Peter & Petra: Aruba's first official wedding of 2010



German wedding planner that they could find in their itinerary. This is a true Ambassador of Goodwill for the island and its former representative of the Aruba Tourism Authority in Germany, Rita Morozow.

Rita is very proud she arranged Aruba's first official wedding of 2010, and with her husband, Helmsley Dykstra of Aruba, picked up the couple at the cruise terminal and shared Peter and Petra's joy at being united in the lovely surroundings of the landmark building where Aruban officials conduct the civil ceremonies required by local law.

AIDA is Germany's largest cruise line, and the couple searched all their destinations for a wedding planner who could help them achieve their dream of nuptials in paradise. A German-speaker to assist them was essential, and they report they are very pleased with the lovely surroundings in which they were married, and the proper solemnity and humor demonstrated by their Aruban officiator, who reminded them of the responsibility of their undertaking, while sincerely wishing them joy all their lives.

Peter's parents, Helmut and Irenäus acted as witnesses for the happy event, and all shared a celebratory toast on the porch of the Stanhuis following the ceremony.

The couple report they have known each other for fifteen years as colleagues in the



ORANJESTAD - Yesterday morning at 11:30 A.M., Berto Christriaans officiated over the first official wedding on Aruba at the Standhuis, or Town Hall, in Oranjestad. The first couple to be joined in matrimony was Peter Reimund and Petra Siegismund of Worms and Ludwigshafen am Rhein, Germany. The couple arranged to take their vows when in Aruba as it was the only port of call during their honeymoon cruise of the Caribbean on the ship Aida which boasted a



health care industry at separate facilities. During a workshop to improve their skills three years ago, Peter and Petra realized there was a definite chemistry at work, and finally decided to demonstrate to the world their love and commitment while on this long-anticipated Caribbean cruise.

Aruba has its share of local weddings, but over the last few years more than 500 nuptials per year conducted for island

visitors have been recorded at Aruba's census office. The fact that Aruba's first civil ceremony for 2010 was a destination wedding is a testament of its continually increasing popularity in this niche market. The majority of these events are conducted for visitors from the U.S., but Peter and Petra are proof positive that the idea of a wedding in an exotic locale is appealing to couples from all over the world! □

Police to get help with murder investigation

~ George advocates for community policing ~

PHILIPSBURG--A team is to be sent to St. Maarten from Curaçao to assist with the investigation into the murder of the Chinese businessman in Dutch Quarter last week, as well as to help look into other crimes, the number of which has skyrocketed in the past months.

National Alliance (NA) Parliamentarian George Pantophlet told The Daily Herald that he had spoken to Justice Minister Magaly Jacoba on Thursday about the latest senseless killing and the rise in crime and she had confirmed that a team was being assembled to be sent to St. Maarten as soon as possible.

More funds have also been allocated to St. Maarten for the crime-combating team. Jacoba was not available Sunday to give details about the amount allocated and the composition of the team.

Pantophlet said that crime needed to be brought under control, and as this was still a Central Government responsibility, he had taken his concern directly to the source that could help – the minister. “We

need more than the equipment. Funds are needed to allow for proper control and tackling of crime on St. Maarten.”

However, he pointed out that sending a team was only a temporary solution to what was beginning to seem like a very permanent problem. “You can transfer the [police] cars to St. Maarten, but I maintain that the funds are key to really taking over responsibilities from the Central Government,” he said.

As of this month, the Central Government can start transferring its tasks to St. Maarten in preparation for country status. Pantophlet and other politicians have maintained that getting the responsibilities, personnel and equipment, but no funds, is counterproductive. “I say give me my funds and my surplus that is on the Central Government budget so we can start looking at permanent solutions to crime.”

The fear of crime has begun to greatly impact people’s lives because some businesses, most of them run by small entrepreneurs, are closing early.

This is not good because it means people work fewer hours, and this may affect their pay in an already troubled economy, the parliamentarian said. “This way, families, as well as the economy, will suffer.” A solution put forward by Pantophlet had been raised first in 1999 during a town hall meeting with Police Commissioner Ademar Doran in the Philipsburg Mutual Improvement Association (PMIA) Hall. The parliamentarian recalled that community policing had been suggested – a system that allows citizens to get more actively involved in monitoring their neighbourhoods for crime or other lawless activities. It had also been suggested that police substations be established in St. Peters-South Reward, Dutch Quarter and Middle Region, as a support to the community policing efforts, he added.

“Quicker response and a constant law enforcement presence that would definitely be a crime deterrent would be created by the substations and the community policing groups,” Pantophlet said. □

Society at war

The senseless killing of the manager of Afoo Supermarket in Dutch Quarter on December 30 once again sparked outcry throughout the community over the long turn-of-the-year weekend. The other Chinese-owned businesses on the island, some 150 in total, understandably are closing their doors partly in protest during the funeral. There is some discussion whether a suspect has been detained and police assistance from Curaçao reportedly is forthcoming, but the incident in any case has affected the sense of security among the public in general and business owners in particular. Solving the crime in question quickly no doubt would help put some of the heightened concern to rest, but certainly not all. While people rightfully look to law enforcement when it comes to crime, society has a role to play as well. That’s why the meetings with the various community councils and nationality groups yesterday and tonight are a welcome initiative. Involving the districts in helping to actively combat crime at the grass-roots level could prove an important tool, especially regarding information on certain developments or activities in an area that could provide valuable assistance to the police, who obviously cannot be everywhere at the same time. If people really want a safer community, they have to work with authorities and stop “looking the other way” when things occur that they know very well cannot see the light of day.

Neighbourhood watches and information on how to recognise potential criminal behaviour in one’s surroundings also can help prevent crime, along with involvement of the community and especially youngsters in positive activities.

What it boils down to is that everyone must realise that it’s not just the police, but society as a whole that is at war with these criminals, in defence of the safety, security, wellbeing and economic livelihood of all. □

Inventory of tasks and funds to be approved

PHILIPSBURG--A preliminary inventory of tasks and funding that have to come to St. Maarten as part of the dismantling of the Netherlands Antilles has been completed by a committee of Island and Central Government civil servants.

This inventory has to be approved by the Central Government as well as agreed to by the Island Council before the process can move ahead.

Finance and Personnel Affairs Commissioner Xavier Blackman said last Wednesday that he expects “high level discussions” on the inventory to start in January with the Central Government.

There are still talks ongoing about the set-up of the dependencies of the Central Government departments and ministries here based on the agreement signed in June.

“It’s a huge puzzle,” Blackman said of the process, a puzzle he hopes will become clear and complete as the dismantling gets into full swing in January.

The law on the transfer of tasks and funds to St. Maarten in preparation for country status was passed in parliament Monday and will become effective on January 1. This law allows for all tasks, except for those that can only be given over as of 10-10-10, to be passed to St. Maarten and Curaçao.

A gradual schedule will be used for the passing of tasks that can be transferred as of January 1 to St. Maarten from the Central Government. Additionally, the Dutch Government will also indicate in February how it will assist St. Maarten financially and with personnel, with the tasks it will assume from the Central Government.

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1BR	WK 51/52	ROOM 219 D	O.V. \$ 8,000 PW
1BR	WK 51/52	ROOM 222 C	P.O. \$ 11,000 PW
1BR	WK 1	ROOM 314 A	P.O. \$ 9,000
1BR	WK 1	ROOM 220 A	P.O. \$ 9,000
1BR	WK 51	ROOM 318 A	P.O. \$ 10,000

CASA DEL MAR

1BR	WK 51	ROOM 1329	P.V. \$ 8,000
2BR	WK 52/1	ROOM 1405/1206	P.O. \$ 50,000

DIVI VILLAGE

STU	WK 50/51	ROOM 3214	G.V. PW \$ 6,000
STU	WK 52	ROOM 110	P.O. \$ 11,000
2BR	WK 01	ROOM 206	P.O

Lobo apoya salida del poder de Micheletti en Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA (AP) - El presidente electo Porfirio Lobo informó el lunes que intenta que el mandatario de facto Roberto Micheletti abandone el cargo antes de asumir el nuevo gobierno el 27 de enero a fin de superar la crisis política generada por el golpe de estado en Honduras. "Es un tema que está en el diálogo que hemos iniciado para que el pueblo deje de sufrir y haya paz en la nación", aseguró. "Micheletti debe ayudar a Honduras y retirarse del poder. Eso lo buscamos porque en esta crisis no debe haber vencidos ni vencedores... y seguimos dialogando para que se cumpla a cabalidad el Acuerdo Tegucigalpa-San José", dijo Lobo a la cadena de radio HRN.

El pacto fue firmado en octubre por Micheletti y el destituido presidente Manuel Zelaya para establecer un gobierno de reconciliación nacional e integrar una comisión de la verdad para conocer los hechos ocurridos antes, durante y después del golpe de estado del 28 de junio de 2009.

Micheletti ha reiterado que estará en el poder hasta que asuma Lobo. Sobre el destino



El presidente electo hondureño Porfirio Lobo habla durante un foro de diálogo nacional en Tegucigalpa, el lunes 14 de diciembre del 2009.

de Zelaya, refugiado en la embajada brasileña desde el 21 de septiembre, Lobo aseguró que "el congreso determinó por amplia mayoría no restituirlo en el puesto".

"Zelaya ahora es un ex presidente por decisión propia de él al someter su suerte al legislativo" en diciembre con el voto de 111 de los 128 diputados, subrayó.

El presidente electo dijo que

trabaja intensamente para que Honduras se reincorpore al seno de la comunidad internacional que la aisló en julio a consecuencias del derrocamiento de Zelaya.

"Las cosas no pueden seguir como han estado y debe haber un cambio de actitud en los hondureños y el mundo. Y debemos ayudarnos los unos con los otros para que haya paz", dijo. Afirmó que el



nuevo gobierno está dispuesto a reanudar las relaciones interrumpidas con países como Estados Unidos y Europa. □

Lobo aseguró que apoya una amnistía política para los grupos que participaron en el golpe de estado y que debe ser analizada por el congreso. "Debe darse una reconciliación nacional... y allí entra en juego la amnistía, que es el punto fundamental para que haya paz en Honduras", expresó. El secretario del congreso, Carlos Lara, dijo a la AP que los legisladores se reunirán la próxima semana para comenzar a analizar la amnistía, que este mes podría quedar aprobada.

"Es un tema prioritario que pronto será discutido por el pleno legislativo y que figura en la agenda de sesiones", aseguró. La amnistía vendría a impedir que los participantes en el derrocamiento de Zelaya sean juzgados por una corte internacional, como han advertido que harán los seguidores de derrocado presidente. □

Ecuador advierte enrarecimiento capa de ozono

Evo Morales tendrá dos ceremonias de asunción al mando

LA PAZ (AP) - El reelecto presidente Evo Morales tomará posesión el 22 de enero en dos ceremonias, una "simbólica" de corte indígena y otra oficial, informó el ministro de Culturas, Pablo Groux.

La primera será en el sitio arqueológico de Tiwanaku y estará presidida por el Consejo de Amautas de esa localidad integrado por ancianos aymaras, etnia a la que pertenece el mandatario, la segunda en importancia después de la quechua.

Morales ya realizó la misma ceremonia cuando asumió en enero de 2006. Esta vez será todo un día y consistirá en una ofrenda a la Pachamama (Madre tierra) y a los dioses andinos por buenos augurios.

Amauta significa en quechua maestro o sabio y era una suerte de consejero de los nobles

incas. Actualmente, ancianos y vecinos notables ejercen un gobierno moral en las comunidades indígenas con mayor autoridad inclusive que las elegidas por voto.

Tiwanaku está a 70 kilómetros al oeste de La Paz y es cuna de la cultura del mismo nombre que floreció 1.500 años antes de Cristo y dejó magníficas construcciones arquitectónicas en piedra, entre ellas el templo de Kalasasaya donde será la ceremonia.

El programa oficial será el 22 de enero y tendrá como escenario el palacio legislativo. A esa ceremonia anticiparon su participación hasta ahora las presidentas de Chile, Michelle Bachelet, y Argentina, Cristina Fernández. Morales ganó las elecciones por el 64% de los votos en las elecciones del 6 de diciembre para un período de cinco años. □

QUITO (AP) - La densidad de la capa de ozono en la zona ecuatorial se encuentra en niveles considerados como mínimos, informó el lunes la Agencia Espacial Civil Ecuatoriana (EXA). En un comunicado, EXA señaló que tras finalizar un estudio de la capa de ozono en la región ecuatorial encontró un "debilitamiento sostenido de la misma durante los últimos meses, en especial en diciembre".

Precisó que la densidad de la capa de ozono, que se mide en unidades Dobson, estuvo por debajo de 250 unidades durante los últimos meses del año 2009, pero con mayor énfasis en diciembre cuando en algunas zonas el promedio estuvo por debajo de 225 unidades Dobson. Destacó que los datos provienen de cuatro satélites que monitorean esa zona del planeta. El promedio normal para esta zona es de 280 a 300 unidades Dobson, según el reporte. □


"FAVI FUNDACION CU VISION"

Hija de Fujimori alista partido para elección en Perú

LIMA (Reuters) - La hija del ex presidente peruano Alberto Fujimori dijo el lunes que inscribirá en las próximas semanas a su partido con miras a las elecciones del 2011 y afirmó que la condena de 25 años contra su padre por abusos a los derechos humanos no afectará su campaña política.

La legisladora Keiko Fujimori, quien se ubica segunda en las preferencias electorales para los comicios presidenciales del 2011, afirmó que la primera prueba de fuego para su partido será las elecciones regionales y municipales de octubre de este año.

"En las próximas semanas debe estar saliendo ya la inscripción de (su partido político) Fuerza 2011", dijo Keiko Fujimori a la radioemisora local RPP.

"Nosotros tenemos el objetivo de volver a hacer obras que, lamentablemente por la burocracia o por la incapacidad de algunos gobiernos, no se están ejecutando de manera

eficiente", agregó.

La legisladora agregó que un eventual gobierno fujimorista será "implacable" con la corrupción y buscará mantener la estabilidad económica.

Según la última encuesta de la firma Ipsos Apoyo publicada a mediados de diciembre, Keiko Fujimori permaneció en el segundo puesto con 20 por ciento detrás del alcalde de la capital de Perú, Luis Castañeda, que ostenta un 23 por ciento de cara a las próximas elecciones presidenciales.

En tercer lugar se ubica el nacionalista y militar retirado Ollanta Humala, con un 11 por ciento, temido por los inversionistas por sus ideas contra el libre mercado.

DESCARTA INDULTO

La justicia peruana confirmó el domingo por unanimidad la condena contra el ex mandatario Fujimori, de 71 años y quien gobernó entre 1990 y el 2000, por la muerte de 25 personas durante una guerra sucia contra la guerrilla



La legisladora Keiko Fujimori (foto), quien se ubica segunda en las preferencias electorales para los comicios presidenciales del 2011, refirió además que la primera prueba de fuego para su partido será las elecciones regionales de octubre de este año. REUTERS/Mariana Bazo/Archivo

izquierdista.

La sentencia condenatoria en primera instancia dictada en abril del año pasado fue la primera por casos de violación a los derechos humanos contra un presidente elegido en las

urnas y juzgado en su propio país en Latinoamérica.

El ex presidente Fujimori fue destituido en el 2000 tras un escándalo de corrupción y vivió refugiado los siguientes años en Japón y Chile, de donde fue extraditado en el 2007.

"Me siento decepcionada porque sé que mi padre es inocente porque conozco cuál fue la lucha antisubversiva de mi padre", afirmó Keiko Fujimori, cuyo partido político goza de mayor popularidad en las zonas pobres del interior del país. □

Venezuela rechaza declaraciones de presidente peruano García

CARACAS (Reuters) - Caracas rechazó el lunes recientes declaraciones del presidente peruano, Alan García, sobre una presunta subordinación del Gobierno de Bolivia al mandatario venezolano, Hugo Chávez.

El gobernante peruano dijo el fin de semana que su homólogo venezolano, ante la imposibilidad de intervenir en asuntos peruanos, "parece que hubiera delegado ese papel en un Gobierno más cercano", en referencia a Bolivia.

"Los indignos comentarios del presidente García no hacen más que remitirlo a las viejas prácticas de las oligarquías del continente, en las que los mandatarios, lejos de servir a sus pueblos, dedicaban su tiempo al vicio, al ocio, y a la elaboración de intrigas para generar odio y desunión", expresó la cancillería en un comunicado.

El presidente boliviano, Evo Morales, lamentó a finales del año pasado que Perú se haya negado a extraditar a tres ministros

bolivianos acusados de genocidio.

De igual manera, el líder socialista venezolano ha criticado reiteradamente al Gobierno de Lima por otorgar asilo a un grupo de opositores venezolanos, lo que ha tensado las relaciones entre ambas naciones.

"Preocupa al Gobierno Bolivariano que el heroico Pueblo del Perú esté siendo deshonrado por un Gobierno que, prostituyendo la figura del asilo, se ha dado a la tarea de convertir a esa hermana Patria en una guarida de políticos corruptos y delincuentes prófugos de la justicia", acotó.

García dijo también que esperaba que Chávez no interviniere en las elecciones presidenciales del 2011 en Perú.

En los comicios del 2006, Chávez apoyó a la cara más visible de la oposición en Perú, el nacionalista Ollanta Humala, quien inquietó a los inversores al amenazar con dar un giro en las políticas de apertura económica del Gobierno peruano. □

Bomberos colombianos combaten siete incendios forestales

BOGOTÁ (AP) - Al menos siete incendios forestales se presentaron en la zona central del país sin que se reportaran víctimas, informó el lunes la oficina de coordinación nacional de Bomberos. El coordinador de bomberos Daniel Castaño dijo que los incendios son "provocados por manos criminales en un 90%" y el resto por acción natural de la sequía a la que está enfrentada Colombia desde mediados de 2009, cuando se inició el llamado fenómeno tropical de El Niño, que calienta las aguas del Océano Pacífico.

"Desde el uno de enero a la fecha se han consumido 38,5 hectáreas de bosque en los departamentos de Antioquia, Cundinamarca y Boyacá, en la zona central de Colombia, precisó en diálogo telefónico. Informó que en los cerros sudorientales de la capital aún se encuentran tres focos de quemas que son controlados por los bomberos, la Defensa Civil y helicópteros de la Fuerza Aérea Colombia, pero no extinguidos totalmente. Durante 2009 por acción de las llamas se extinguieron 28.198 hectáreas de bosque y plantaciones, según la Dirección de Gestión de Riesgo. □

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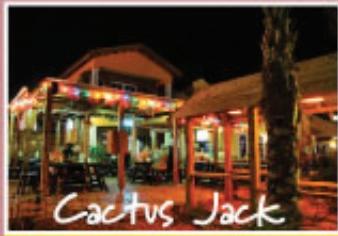


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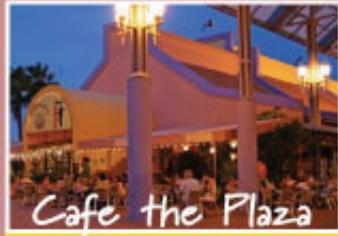
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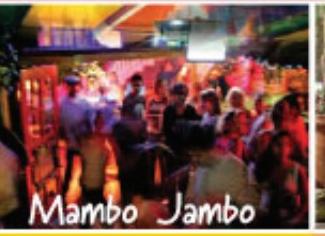
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